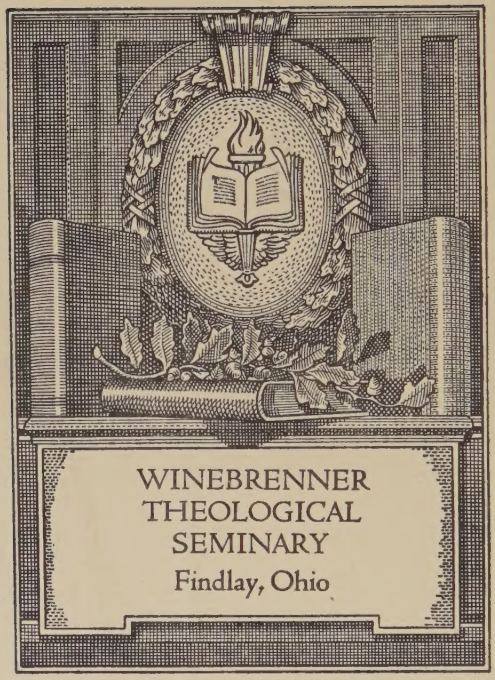
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THE EVOLUTION OF THEOLOGY IN THE GREEK PHILOSOPHERS.

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MCMIV.

The Evolution of Theology

in the

Greek Philosophers

The Gifford Lectures
delivered in the University of Glasgow in
Sessions 1900-1 *and* 1901-2

By Edward Caird
LL.D., D.C.L., D.Litt.
Fellow of the British Academy; Corresponding Member of the French Academy
Master of Balliol College, Oxford; Late Professor of Moral Philosophy
in the University of Glasgow

Vol. I.

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DEDICATED

TO THE MEMORY OF

WILLIAM WALLACE

LATE FELLOW AND TUTOR OF MERTON COLLEGE, AND
WHITE'S PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

80- 709

Es sagen's aller Orten
Alle Herzen unter dem himmlischen Tage,
Jedes in seiner Sprache.

PREFACE

THESE volumes contain the Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of Glasgow in Sessions 1900-1 and 1901-2. I have, however, rewritten most of them, and have added three lectures upon parts of the subject which I was not able to discuss with sufficient fullness.

I have attempted, so far as was possible within the limits of such a course of lectures, to give an account of those ideas of Greek philosophy which have most powerfully affected the subsequent development of theological thought. In doing so, I have had to make a selection of topics which may require some explanation, both as to what it includes and as to what it excludes. On the one hand, I have thought it best to confine myself mainly to the most important writers, to Plato and Aristotle, to the chief representatives of the Stoic philosophy, and to Philo and Plotinus among the Neo-Platonists; and I have made no attempt to deal with secondary

variations of opinion among the less important writers of the various schools. On the other hand, in regard to the philosophers of whom I have written more fully, I have dealt with many aspects of their thought which may not seem to bear directly upon theology. Thus I have treated at considerable length the question of the development of the Platonic philosophy in its logical and ethical as well as in its metaphysical and theological aspects. And though I have not gone quite so far in other cases, I have not hesitated to introduce a comparatively full account of the theoretical and practical philosophy of Aristotle and of the Stoics. It seemed to me quite impossible to show the real meaning of the theological speculations of these writers without tracing out their connexion with the other aspects of their philosophy. In the case of Plotinus I do not need to make any such statement; for theology is so obviously the centre of all his thought, that everything else has to be directly viewed in relation to it. In truth, however, this is only a matter of degree. A man's religion, if it is genuine, contains the summed-up and concentrated meaning of his whole life; and, indeed, it can have no value except in so far as it does so. And it is even more obvious that the theology of a philosopher is the ultimate outcome of his whole view of the universe, and particularly of his con-

ception of the nature of man. It is, therefore, impossible to show the real effect and purport of the former without exhibiting very carefully and fully its relations to the latter.

I find it very difficult to trace out my obligations to the numerous writers on the subjects of which I have written. Of the books which I have recently studied, I owe most to Baûmker's *Das Problem der Materie in der Griechischen Philosophie*, to Bonhöffer's *Epictet und die Stoa*, and to the account of Plotinus in von Hartmann's *Geschichte der Metaphysik*. I may also mention Whitaker's *The Neo-Platonists*, which contains a very careful and thorough account of the whole history and influence of Neo-Platonism.

I have been much assisted by the opportunity I have had of discussing various points with Professor Cook Wilson, with Professor Henry Jones, and with Mr. J. A. Smith of Balliol College.

Professor Jones and Mr. R. A. Duff of Glasgow University have read all the proofs of these volumes, and have made many suggestions which have been very useful to me.

The work of preparing an Index has been kindly undertaken by Mr. Hayward Porter.

Balliol College,
Oxford, *November*, 1903.

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LECTURE FIRST.

THE RELATION OF RELIGION TO THEOLOGY.

A GREAT part of the scientific and philosophical work of this century has been the application of the idea of evolution to the organic world and to the various departments and interests of human life. And, as religion is the most comprehensive of all these interests—that which goes highest and lowest in man, and, as it were, sums up in itself all other interests—it was inevitable that the attempt should be made to throw new light on it by means of this idea. I need not dwell upon the importance and extent of the researches into the whole history of man's religious life which have been prompted and guided by this conception, nor upon the variety of interpretations which have been given to it. In a set of lectures delivered in another University,[1] I endeavoured to deal with certain aspects of the subject. I there tried to show, in the first place,

[1] *The Evolution of Religion* (MacLehose & Sons, Glasgow).

what is the principle that underlies and finds expression in the religious life of man, or, in other words, what it is that makes him a religious being, a being who in all ages has been conscious of himself as standing in vital relation to a supreme object of reverence and worship whom he calls God. In the second place, I tried to show that, while this consciousness of God finds an adequate expression only in the highest forms of religious thought and experience, we can detect the beginnings of it, under very crude and elementary forms, even in the superstitions of savages. And, though our knowledge does not yet enable us, if it ever will enable us, to solve many of the problems connected with the transmission and filiation of the religious movements of different times and nations, yet we can trace out a fairly distinct and continuous series of stages through which the religious life of man has passed.

There is, however, one aspect of this process of development which is worthy of special attention, and on which I could only touch incidentally in my former lectures. This is the great and growing importance of reflective thought—in other words, of the conscious reaction of mind upon the results of its own unconscious or obscurely conscious movements—in the sphere of religion. The impulse which makes man religious, and which determines the character of the object worshipped as well as the manner of worship,

may be a rational one, but it is certainly not due in the first instance to the activity of conscious reason. As man thinks and argues, makes judgments and draws inferences, long before he begins to examine into the nature and laws of the logical process, as he builds up for himself some kind of social order and learns to observe moral rules and customs long before he thinks of asking for any ultimate principle of ethics, so he is a religious being long before he seeks to understand or to criticise, to maintain or to dispute the validity of the religious consciousness. Theology is not religion; it is at best the philosophy of religion, the reflective reproduction and explanation of it; and, as such, it is the product of a time that has outgrown simple faith and begun to feel the necessity of understanding what it believes. Early religion does not trouble itself about its own justification: it does not even seek to make itself intelligible. It manifests itself in a ritual rather than a creed. And even when, as in Greece, it becomes more articulate and rises to some imaginative expression of itself in a mythology which can furnish a theme for art and poetry, yet, even then, it does not ask for any reason for its own existence, or attempt to gather up its general meaning and purport in a doctrine. It is intuitive rather than reflective, practical rather than speculative, conscious rather than self-conscious. It has a vigorous life, which maintains itself against all

the other interests of man and strives to subdue and assimilate them to itself; but it does not endeavour to formulate its own principle or estimate its relations to these other interests. We are a long way down the stream of religious history ere we meet with anything like a book-religion, *i.e.* a religion that has a sufficiently definite view of itself to fix its own image in a sacred literature. And from that there is still a long way to traverse ere we find any attempt made to liberate the religious idea from its imaginative dress, to define the character of the object of worship, or to discuss its relations to nature and to man.

Nevertheless man is from the first self-conscious, and he is continually on the way to become more clearly conscious of himself and of all the elements and phases of his being. Slow as may be the movement of his advance, the time must at last come when he turns back in thought upon himself, to measure and criticise, to select and to reject, to reconsider and remould by reflexion, the immediate products of his own religious life. And though he can never metaphorically, any more than literally, 'stand upon his head'; though the day will never come when, in Goethe's satirical phrase, the world shall be held together by philosophy and not by hunger and love; though, in short, man cannot lay the foundations of his existence in conscious reason, or build it up from

beginning to end with deliberate plan and purpose; yet in the long process of his history the part played by reflexion must become more and more important. Even if we allow that reflective thought cannot originate any entirely new moral or religious movement, yet it is inevitable that it should become continually more powerful to disturb and to modify religious faith, and that, in consequence, man's hold of beliefs which he cannot justify to himself should become more and more relaxed. Nay, it is inevitable that the results of reflective criticism should enter more and more deeply into the very substance of religion itself, so that it becomes scarcely possible for those who hold it to avoid theorising it.

Thus, to take an obvious instance, the later religion of the Jews was no longer that simple religious sentiment which held the race of Israel together by binding them all to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It had become enriched with wider thoughts by the chequered experiences of its national history, by the captivity and exile —which, as it were, tore it away from its natural root and forced it to seek a new and spiritual principle of life—by the manifold relations of sympathy and antagonism with other peoples into which the Hebrews were brought. Thus it was that the most narrowly national of all races gradually

became the organ of a spirit of prophecy, which looked forward to the universal reign of a God of all men, whose worshippers should be distinguished not by race but only by the energy and purity of their moral life. For it may fairly be said that if the prophets still put forward a claim for the supremacy of Israel, it was rather as the leader of humanity in the path of spiritual progress than as a specially privileged and exclusive nationality. A religion that thus rose into the atmosphere of universality, freeing the spirits of its worshippers from the bonds of time and place, was no product of mere feeling or unconscious reason. It showed in its inmost texture the working of reflexion, and its life could be sustained only by continued reflexion. It was so far lifted above all that was local and particular in Judaism that it could encounter the speculative thought of Greece almost upon equal terms. It had become itself something like a philosophy, and could, therefore, in Alexandria and elsewhere, easily make terms with another philosophy, and blend or coalesce with it into a new product.

And what is true of the religion of Israel is still more true of Christianity. Springing out of a Judaism which was already deeply tinged with Greek ideas, and developing itself under the constant pressure of Greek influences, Christianity was from the first what we may call a reflective re-

ligion, a religion which gathered into itself many of the results of both Eastern and Western thought. Already in the New Testament, it is not only a religion, but it contains, especially in the writings of St. Paul, the germs of a theology. Hence, strictly speaking, it has never been, and can never be, a religion of simple faith; or, if it ever relapses into such a faith, it immediately begins to lose its spiritual character, and to assimilate itself to religions that are lower in the scale. It is not merely that, as Anselm and the Schoolmen generally contended, it is allowable for the Christian to advance from faith to reason, from *veneratio* to *delectatio*, but that, for him, not to do so is speedily to lose hold of that which is most valuable in his faith. And if he yields to a fear of the dangers of reflexion, with the doubt and perplexity which attend it, and declines into the easier path of reliance on some kind of authority, he will inevitably turn his creed into a dead formula and his worship into a superstition. This does not, of course, mean that a true Christian must be a philosopher—philosophy is a special department of activity like any other—but it means that the Christian cannot in the long run maintain his faith unless he is continually turning it into living thought, using it as a key to the difficulties of life, and endeavouring to realise what light it throws on

his own nature and on his relations to his fellow-men and to God. And, if he does so, however small may be his speculative powers, his religion is on the way to become a theology.

Here, however, we meet with one of our greatest difficulties, a difficulty which, more than any other, has embarrassed the development of religion during the last two centuries. For it is an obvious fact that philosophy or reflective thought has often been regarded, and not seldom has regarded itself, not as the ally and interpreter, but as the enemy of the faith in which religion begins; not as evolving and elucidating, but as disintegrating and destroying, the beliefs which are the immediate expression of the religious life. And sometimes also it has undertaken to provide a more or less efficient substitute for them. This was the claim put forward in behalf of the so-called Natural Religion by many representatives of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, and it has been supposed to be put forward by the adherents of some later systems of thought. On the other hand, there have been, and there are, many who hold that the teaching of reason and philosophy upon religious subjects is mainly negative; that its chief result is to show that all religious faith is what Matthew Arnold called extra-belief (*Aberglaube*), an illusion of the imagination and the feelings for which there is no rational evidence; or at least

that, if it does substitute anything for the complex creeds of Christendom, it is something so vague and general that it cannot have any important influence upon the life of man. Thus the Supreme Being of Deism was so distant and abstract a conception that it could scarcely be said to do more than keep the place open for a possible God. And Mr. Herbert Spencer does not substantially alter the case, when he claims the whole sphere of attainable knowledge for science, and generously gives up to religion the infinite spaces of the Unknowable. For a worship of the Unknowable would at best only serve the purpose of the lictor who in the midst of a Roman triumph reminded the victorious Imperator that he too was mortal. Religion, on such a basis, would be nothing but a recognition of the impassable bounds of the *flammantia moenia mundi*, the inevitable limits of human knowledge and human destiny. It could not be—what Christianity and all the higher religions have claimed to be—the great power that consecrates and idealises the life of man by relating it to that which is eternal and divine.

Such a view of reason as the rival or enemy of faith is naturally met, on the other side, by a proclamation of faith as the enemy of reason. If natural religion be set up as the substitute for revealed religion, it is eagerly pointed out by some theologians that the substitute is inefficient; that, as it rests upon abstract

thought, it can at best meet the wants only of the few who live by thought, and that, even for them, it is a precarious and uncertain possession; since it is devoid of that power of interesting the feelings and transforming the life which belongs to the beliefs that come to us in a more direct way, prior to and independent of the deliberate action of the intelligence. On the other hand, if it be argued that reason is entirely opposed to the claims of faith, that its attempts to deal with the problem of religion inevitably lead to a conviction that the problem is insoluble by any of the methods of human science, and that, therefore, the only rational creed is Agnosticism—this very argument is apt to be accepted by religious men as a confession of the incapacity of reason to deal with the highest interests of man's spiritual life. In this way many Roman Catholic writers like De Maistre, and many Protestant writers like Mansel and, to a certain extent also, Mr. Balfour, have tried to maintain the cause of religion on the basis of philosophical scepticism. They have contended that reason, except within the limits of empirical science, is a purely analytical and therefore disintegrating agency, which can create nothing and develop nothing, and which tears up by the roots the tree of life in the effort to see how it grows. They have sometimes endeavoured, on the basis of the Kantian criticism of knowledge, to show that, in face of the great problems of life—

of all the problems, in fact, with which religion is specially concerned—reason is placed between two alternatives, neither of which it is able to accept as true. And they have in various ways tried to exploit this incompetence of reason in the interests of faith, sometimes of faith in an external authority, at other times of a faith in some immediate or intuitive consciousness which is maintained to be prior to reason and above its criticism.

Now, whatever side we take in such a controversy, the result seems to be that there is a deep and apparently incurable schism in the spiritual life of man, a schism between his unconscious and his conscious life; or, as we may perhaps more accurately state it—since man is always in a sense both conscious and self-conscious—a schism between man's immediate experience and the reflexion in which he is involved whenever he attempts to understand himself. And instead of a *fides quaerens intellectum*, a faith which is simply the first direct grasp of the soul at truth, and which therefore leads on necessarily to the more adequate comprehension and appreciation of it, we have, on the one side, a faith that withdraws itself from criticism by raising a plea against the competence of the critic, and, on the other, a reason which treats faith as another name for illusion.

Now, it seems to me that we can to some extent sympathise with the motives of both sides in this

old controversy. On the one hand, a faith which is not seeking intelligence is a faith which is stunted and perverted; for, as we have seen, the very nature of religion, and especially of the Christian religion, involves and stimulates reflexion upon the great issues of life. Hence the attempt to defend Christianity by questioning the right of the intelligence to criticise it, is suicidal. The bulwark which it sets up for the defence of religion is also a barrier in the way of its natural development; and a religion which does not develop must soon die. The faith that does not seek, but shuns and repels knowledge, is already losing its rational character. The exclusion of science from the sphere of religion —meaning, as it does, also the exclusion of religion from the sphere of science—necessarily leads to its withdrawal from other spheres of human life until, instead of being the key to all other interests, religion becomes a concern by itself, and, we might almost say, a private concern of the individual.

On the other hand, it seems difficult to admit the claim of science at all without making it so absolute as to leave no room for faith; and that whether religion be conceived as irrational or as rational. For while, in the former case, religion is set aside and Agnosticism takes its place, in the latter case it seems as if faith must equally disappear, because reason provides a complete substitute for it, a

religio philosophi which is based on a definite philosophical conception of the nature of God, and a definite proof of His existence. Thus, if it be admitted that a scientific interpretation of religion is possible, it might seem that this interpretation must take the place of religion itself; that, if faith can be explained by reason, reason must become the nemesis of faith. Moreover, it is impossible that religion can be rationalised without being greatly modified; and if such a transformation be justifiable, how can we regard the first form of religion as more than a temporary and provisional scaffolding which has to be removed when the building is completed? Thus, to treat the claims of knowledge as absolute seems fatal to faith; but, on the other hand, it is futile to admit the right of intelligence to examine and criticise up to a certain point and no farther. All such compromises between reason and faith must break down, because we can find no third power beyond both to determine their respective limits; while, if we allow either reason or faith to determine them, the power which does so is *ipso facto* recognised as supreme. In particular, if reason be limited by anything but itself, it is enslaved; it becomes, as the Scholastic theologians maintained it should be, the *ancilla fidei*; and the voice of a slave has no authority: it can add no weight to the word of the master.

It is impossible that religion can receive any real aid or service from the activity of philosophical reflexion unless such reflexion is absolutely free. And if it be free, it seems as if it could recognise no right but its own, as if it must set aside as irrelevant all beliefs and doctrines which have arisen independently of its own action, and as if, in building up its scientific creed, it must clear the ground of all that occupied it before. Yet, if it does so, the fate of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, and that of the Agnosticism of the present day, seem to show that religious belief is likely to evaporate in our hands, or to reduce itself to something so vague and empty that it can hardly have any influence upon the life of man.

I have been trying to put as sharply as possible a dilemma which has greatly exercised the minds of men during the last two centuries, and which is still the source of perplexity to many. On the one hand, it seems as if religious faith must seek reason, as a condition of its own life; and yet that, in seeking reason, it seeks its own destruction. It must seek reason: for it is impossible that any real faith can live without attempting to understand itself or develop its own intellectual content; and when it has once entered upon this course, it cannot stop short of the end. If it appeals to reason, to reason it must go. And if at any point it becomes apprehensive, and

endeavours to put a stop to the process of reflexion and criticism, above all if it calls in the aid of scepticism to defend it against such criticism, it loses something of its sincerity, its wholeness of heart, and of the courage and freedom that goes only with such sincerity. Thus it is driven back upon itself and deprived of that firm hold upon thought and life which it formerly possessed. The result is that religion, which should be the great principle of unity in human life, becomes the source of the most unhappy of all its divisions. Or if, again, the other alternative be adopted, and it is recognised that, in an age of science, religion, like everything else, must submit to criticism on pain of losing its moral influence, it seems as if, at the best, we were inviting such an idealistic re-interpretation of Christianity as has been attempted by Kant, by Schelling, and by Hegel: and then, it is alleged by many, we are substituting for a religion of the heart and will, a religion of the intellect that dissolves away all those personal relations of God and man which constitute the living power of Christianity. And if this be the best, what is the worst? It is that all such attempts to explain or reconstitute religion upon a new basis should fail, or, like the Natural Religion of the eighteenth century, should dissolve away in abstraction, and leave us with nothing to correspond to religion except the consciousness that beyond all that

we can feel and know there is an infinite unknown, and that, in short, we ourselves

> "are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep."

Now there cannot be any doubt that this is a real difficulty, which has produced and is now more than ever producing a division in our life, and ranging us in opposite ranks, and that not on the ground of any individual or class prejudice, but on the ground of what are really the highest interests of man's intellectual and moral life: setting on the one side those who feel that the powers of man's spiritual nature can be fully drawn out only by a religion that makes the strongest personal appeal to his will and affections, and who therefore cling to forms of belief which they refuse to criticise and try to exempt from criticism: and setting on the other side those to whom the most vital of all causes is the cause of truth and intellectual honesty, and who are therefore prepared to accept the results of free enquiry, even if it should tear away from them everything they would wish to believe. Nay, this is a division which everyone who is open to the intellectual influences of the time must feel in himself, as a conflict, or apparent conflict, between two claims, both of which rise out of his own nature. There are many writings of the last century which might be

adduced as evidence of the prevalence of such a state of mind. Thus in reading Mill's *Essays on Religion*—a book which attracted much attention when it was first published—we can see that the author is continually asking himself how much he may still believe and hope, how much of Christianity he may retain consistently with his scientific integrity. And there are at the present day numerous writers, like Professor James, who maintain that there is a point at which we have a right, without any other evidence, to take what we think most desirable for our own spiritual life as by that very fact sufficiently evidenced to be true; a point at which, in short, belief may be safely founded on the 'will to believe.' Yet from this there is only a step to the acceptance of the principles of Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, which asserts the right—in the general impossibility of finding sufficient evidence for any kind of religious truth—to treat insufficient evidence as if it were sufficient. On the other hand, there are many who regard all such expedients for the establishment or restoration of faith as more or less refined adaptations of Pascal's straightforward counsel: "*Il faut s'abêtir*"; and who, therefore, think themselves obliged to accept the conclusion that our advancing knowledge is only making us more clearly realise the limits of our life and the impossibility of our discovering either whence it comes or whither it goes, or what is the unknown

power that rules it; and that the intense life of religious faith, in which so much that is great in the past life of man had its source and spring, was based upon an illusion, with which, for good or evil, we must learn henceforth to dispense.

Now, it cannot be denied that much remains to be done ere such difficulties as these can be solved or removed. But I think that there is already in our hands, in the idea of Evolution, a kind of Eirenicon or means of bringing the opposing sides nearer to an understanding with each other. In particular, that idea enables us to throw some new light upon the relations of the unconscious or unreflective to the conscious or reflective life, as stages or factors in the development of man; and thus, as it were, to break off the horns of the dilemma of which we have been speaking—a dilemma which really arises from their being sharply and abstractly opposed to each other. For, in the first place, in the very idea that they are two factors or stages of one life, it is involved that they are not governed by two absolutely antagonistic principles, but that there is an essential link of connexion between them. Their difference and opposition, however far it may reach, must ultimately be conceived as secondary and capable of being explained from their unity. Their conflict, in short, must be taken as analogous to the conflict of different members or

forms of vital activity in one organism, a competition which in the healthy organism is always subordinated to co-operation, or at least only ceases to be co-operation at a lower stage that it may become co-operation at a higher. It is thus that in organic evolution greater differentiation of function proves itself to be the means to deeper integration and more concentrated unity. And in this unity nothing that was valuable in the lower stage of life is ultimately sacrificed, however much the form may be changed.

Applying this to the case before us, we cannot admit that there is any fatal opposition between the unconscious or unreflective movement of man's mind and that which is conscious and reflective. It is the same reason that is at work in both, and all that reflexion can do is to bring to light the processes and categories which underlie the unreflective action of the intelligence, and, in doing so, to make the use of them more definite and adequate. We must, therefore, maintain that, though reason may accidentally become opposed to faith, its ultimate and healthy action must preserve for us, or restore to us, all that is valuable in faith. Or, if it necessarily comes into collision with faith at a certain stage of development, at a further stage this antagonism must disappear, or be reduced within ever narrower limits. Nay, in the long run a living faith will absorb into itself the elements of

the criticism which is directed against it, and grow by their means into a higher form of religious life. We are too often disposed to say: *Fiat justitia, ruat coelum*, and to forget that justice sustains the universe, and cannot be the cause of its ruin. And so we are too apt to think the division of faith and reason to be incurable, and to suppose that we must choose the one and reject the other; forgetting that a faith that really springs out of our rational or spiritual nature, or commends itself to it, cannot be fundamentally irrational or incapable of being explained and defended; and that a reason which is unable to find an intelligible meaning in some of the deepest experiences of human souls, must be one-sided and imperfectly developed. Hence, while we cannot deny the relative opposition of the two forms of spiritual life, and are indeed obliged to recognise it as one of the most potent factors in development, we cannot admit that it is an absolute opposition.

Nor, again, is it possible to be satisfied with a conception of progress that has often been advocated in the last century, by no one more forcibly than by Thomas Carlyle, the conception of an alternation of two different eras of human history—an era of intuition, faith, and unconsciousness, in which the minds of men are at one with themselves, and work joyfully and successfully in the service of some idea

which inspires them, but which they never seek to question or analyse, and an era of reflexion in which the "native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," in which faith grows weak, and the symbols which formerly satisfied the souls of men, and united them with each other, are dissected and torn to pieces by scepticism. Apparently Carlyle has little consolation for those who are born in such an unhappy age of transition, except to bid them wait for a new inspiration, a new imaginative synthesis, which shall set up another symbol in place of that which has disappeared. Least of all has he any trust in the reflective intelligence, in the work of thought, as capable of bringing about such a synthesis or substantially contributing towards it. But a deeper consideration of the process in question may show, as I have already indicated, that the two great movements which constitute it, the movement of unconscious construction, faith and intuition, and the movement of reflective analysis and critical reconstruction, are not essentially opposed, but rather form the necessary complements of each other in the development of man's spiritual life: and that, as it is essential to faith that it should develop into reason, so the criticism of faith, as it is a criticism by reason of its own unconscious products, cannot be ultimately destructive or merely negative in its effect. Its

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searching fires may, indeed, burn up much of the wood, hay, stubble—the perishable adjuncts that attach themselves to the edifice of human faith —but they cannot touch the stones of the building, still less the eternal foundation on which it is built. I will not conceal my conviction that its dissolving power must be fatal to many things which men have thought and still think to be bound up with their religious life, but I do not believe that it will destroy anything that is really necessary to it. Christianity is not, like some earlier religions, essentially connected with imaginative symbols, which must lose their hold upon man's mind so soon as he is able to distinguish poetry from prose. It had its origin, as we have seen, in an age which was, up to a certain point, an age of reflexion, and the first movement of its life was to break away from the local and national influences of the region in which it was born. It lived and moved from the beginning in an atmosphere of universality, and in spite of the reactionary influences to which in its further history it was exposed and which gradually affected its life and doctrine, it never lost its essentially universal character. Hence, when its official representatives had turned it into a system of superstition and obstruction, its own influences have often inspired the reformers and revolutionists who attacked and

overthrew that system. It has thus, we might say, brought "not peace but a sword" into the life of men, because it would not let them rest in any partial or inadequate solution of their difficulties, or in anything short of the ideal of humanity which it set before them. Such a universal religion, built upon the idea of the unity of man with God, and therefore on the conviction that the universe in which man lives is in its ultimate meaning and reality a spiritual world, cannot be justly regarded as a transitory phase of human development, or as a creation of feeling and imagination which science and philosophy are bound ultimately to displace. Whatever may become of the special doctrines in which it has found its first reflective expression, it contains a kernel which is essentially rational and which cannot but gain greater and greater importance the more man's spiritual life is developed. It has in it a seed of ideal truth which is one with man's mind—the *anima naturaliter Christiana* of which Tertullian speaks—and which therefore must grow with its growth and strengthen with its strength. And philosophy, in spite, or rather because, of its critical reaction upon all the products of Christian thought and life, must in the long run supply one of the most important of all the agencies by which that seed is brought to maturity. It must show itself

neither as the enemy of religion, nor as a substitute for it, but as the purest form of its consciousness of itself, and therefore as the great means of its development.

The view of the evolution of religion and of its relation to theology which I have stated is one that has been gaining ground in modern philosophy ever since the time of Leibniz. It occupies an important place in the theories of all the German idealists from Kant to Hegel, and in those of many other writers who have followed in their footsteps during the last century. From what has been said above, it will be seen that the objections brought against it may be summed up under two heads: they are either the objections of those who would separate philosophy from life or the objections of those who would separate life from philosophy.

The former class of objections have not seldom been urged by recent critics, generally in the interest of religion. If philosophy can explain and criticise religion, still more if it can in any sense be said to give it a new and more rational form, must it not, they ask, set religion aside and take its place? In other words, does not such a reflective interpretation of religion involve the substitution of the philosophy of religion for religion itself, and therefore of a mere intellectual process for an experience which embraces the whole com-

plex nature of man, feeling, thought, and will? If so, then the change of form, which philosophical reflexion brings with it, will involve such a transformation of the whole content of religion as well as of the attitude of the individual towards it, that all the vivid interest of immediate religious experience must die out and leave in its place a mere *caput mortuum* of abstraction or a dialectical movement of thought, which are as far removed from life as the conceptions of pure mathematics.

Such a view, however, involves an entire misconception of the work of philosophy and its relation to life. To say that a religion must develop into a theology does not mean that theology as a system of thought must take the place of religion. It was a fatal inversion of the true order of spiritual things, when doctrines as to the nature of God were treated by so-called Natural Religion as the basis of the religious life, instead of being regarded as the results of an effort to interpret it. Philosophy, if we separate it from life, can never be a substitute for life; it is only life brought to self-consciousness; and to say that it is higher than the other forms of life is either untrue, or true only in a sense to which no reasonable objection can be taken. It is true only in the sense that a religion which understands itself, which has reflected on the principles on which it is based, is an advance upon a religion that

has not so reflected. But theology no more gives us a new religion than the science of ethics gives us a new morality. Under limitations shortly to be stated, they cannot do so, and if they did, they would be worse than useless. They would be carrying us to another life and another experience, when what we want is to explain the life we are actually leading and the experiences we are having here and now. They would be liable to all the objections of those who say that the philosopher builds up a purely ideal world 'out of his own head.' If any philosopher ever did so, he might justly be left as its sole inhabitant. The only truth in the objection is that —while it is the business of philosophy simply to explain experience, and among other things to explain the religion and morality that exist and not any other—yet it is inevitable that our ethical and religious attitude should be greatly changed by our attaining to a reflective consciousness of the principles which we had before been using without reflexion. Ethics does not, and cannot produce a morality which is essentially different from the morality of immediate experience, the morality existing in the intuitive vision of good men, who live up to the highest standard of their time, and in living up to it carry it a step higher. Yet it is true to say that reflexion contributes to moral progress. If, for example, we reflect on the order of

the State and bring to light the principle that dominates its activities, the unity that pervades and connects its dispersed rules and institutions, the State becomes in a sense a new thing for us. The consciousness of the meaning of our life must react upon the life itself and conduce to its improvement by liberating the political idea from the accidents of its temporary embodiment. And so it is with religion. As reflexion advances, it leads to a distinction which is continually growing clearer, between that which is accidental and of temporary value and that which is essential and fruitful for all time; and this in turn must bring about a further development of the latter at the expense of the former. Thus as man's progress, in one important aspect of it, is a progress to self-consciousness, he is in some sense a new man when he has gained a new consciousness of himself. But it would be repeating the central mistake of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century to separate speculation from life and to make it a substitute for the experience from which it springs. The main practical use of philosophy is to prune away the accretions of time, to counteract the tendency to stereotype or fossilise particular forms of life and thought, and so to give room for the further growth of the spirit of man. Philosophy is the criticism of life, and to separate it from life or substitute it for

life, would be like attributing to the gardener what is due to the vital forces of the plant. The metaphor, indeed, fails to be adequate, but it fails in a way that tends further to emphasise the principle illustrated by it. For the philosophy that criticises life is an element in the life it criticises, and the treatment of it as something independent, something that sets up claims for itself, must end in depriving it of its *raison d'être* and making it barren and unfruitful.

On the other hand, if it be an error to attempt to separate philosophy, as the criticism of life, from life itself, it is an equal error to attempt to separate life from philosophy. There is a literal truth in the saying of Socrates, that "a life without criticism is not worthy of being lived by men"; and even that, strictly speaking, it cannot be lived by them. As I have already attempted to show, the critical reaction of the human mind upon experience begins almost as soon as the experience itself. Least of all is it possible to separate man's highest life, his religious experience, from such a critical reaction; and in this sense theology begins to exist as soon as religion has taken any definite form. At the same time it is true that the criticism does not separate itself from the thing criticised till a comparatively late stage of human history. It works rather as a silent transforming influence, modifying and improving the beliefs of men or

gradually making one belief obsolete and causing another to triumph over it.

Looking at it from this point of view, therefore, we may fairly say that the beginning of theology is to be found in Greek philosophy; for it was in Greece that reflexion first became free, and at the same time systematic. It was in Greece that philosophy first organised itself as a relatively separate interest, over against the immediate practical interests of life. Philosophy, indeed, cannot detach itself from life; in so far as it does so, it must be smitten with barrenness. Its office is to bring life to clear self-consciousness, and because Greek philosophy did this, it acquired and maintained a relative independence. And it is this that gives primary importance to its contribution to theology. There is, it is true, a theological philosophy of India, which is earlier in development than Greek philosophy; but the thought of India, though often subtle and profound, is unmethodical; and when it goes beyond the most abstract ideas it mixes the forms of imagination with those of religion in a way that does not conduce to distinct and adequate thinking. And, while it is not easy to ascertain what elements it has contributed to Western theology, it may safely be asserted that its influence was secondary and subordinate. Even in the Neoplatonic philosophy, which is most kindred in spirit with it, the likeness

is mainly at least the result of the independent development of Greek speculation. It was the thought of Greece which, in this as in other departments, gave to the philosophical enquiries of Christendom a definite method and a definite aim. It was from Greece that the Fathers of the Church borrowed the forms of thought, the fundamental conceptions of nature and human life, in short, all the general presuppositions which they brought to the interpretation of the Christian faith. Hence it is hardly possible to trace with intelligence the evolution of doctrines either in the early or medieval Church, or in modern times, without a previous study of the development of theology in the Greek philosophers.

LECTURE SECOND.

STAGES IN THE EVOLUTION OF THEOLOGY.

In the last lecture I said that Theology begins in Greece, or at least that it is not necessary to trace it farther back; for it is there that we find philosophical reflexion, upon religion as upon other subjects, for the first time distinctly emancipating itself from sensuous images, and attempting to define its objects by their essential nature and relations to each other. Theology is religion brought to self-consciousness. It is the reflective analysis of the consciousness of God in its distinctive form, and in its connexion with all our other consciousness of reality. In this technical sense the word Theology first appears in Aristotle, as a name for what was afterwards called Metaphysic, the science which seeks to discover and exhibit the fundamental principles of Being and Knowing, and which therefore finds its ultimate object in God. But, while the word is not found before Aristotle,[1] the thing itself

[1] The word 'theologian' occurs in Plato, but only in the sense of a mythologist.

already exists in its full development in Plato, who, for good or evil, is deeply imbued with the theological spirit, and might, indeed, justly be called the first systematic theologian. In other words, he is the first philosopher who grasped the idea that lies at the root of all religion, and made it the centre of his whole view of the universe.

Now, that which underlies all forms of religion, from the highest to the lowest, is the idea of God as an absolute power or principle. For, as I have attempted to show elsewhere,[1] the religious consciousness, in its essential meaning, is the consciousness of a Being who embraces all our life and gives unity and direction to it, who lifts us above ourselves and binds our limited and transitory existence to the eternal. It is the consciousness that all our finite experience presupposes and rests upon a principle which comprehends all its various contents and transcends all its differences. It is, finally, the consciousness that, beyond all the objects we perceive without us, and beyond all the states and activities of the self within us, there is a unity which manifests itself in both, and from which neither can be separated. Now, such a consciousness is not an arbitrary product of circumstances; it is a necessary condition of the development of the mind of man, an experience which, in some form or other, man must make as he comes

[1] *The Evolution of Religion*; see especially I, Lect. 3.

to realise the meaning of his own life, an idea which is presupposed from the first in all science and all morality, and which must rise to the surface when their nature is understood. It is seldom, indeed, that we recognise fully and distinctly the unity of the whole in which our existence is contained. But when we analyse our experience, and search out its ultimate conditions, we are forced to realise that all that we know is known as a factor in one experience, the experience of one world, and that such a unity is the presupposition of all our consciousness, both of ourselves and of other objects. The idea of the continuity and self-consistency of the intelligible world, as a system which throughout all its differences is the manifestation of one principle, may seem at first to be a distant and difficult conception; but it is in reality very near to us, and indeed may be shown to be the source of all our spiritual life. To think, to feel, to will—all the forms of our consciousness—are ultimately bound up with the idea of an all-comprehending whole; and to believe in a God is, in the last resort, simply to realise that there is a principle of unity in that whole, akin to that which gives unity to our own existence as self-conscious beings. Nor is the truth of this statement affected by the fact that it is the result of a reflective analysis of belief, which goes much beyond the immediate consciousness of the believer.

Now, if this be the real or ultimate meaning of religion, as I have attempted elsewhere to show, we are obliged to draw a marked contrast between the religious and the profane or secular consciousness. The secular consciousness—*i.e.* our ordinary unreflective consciousness of ourselves and the world—starts from the division and separation of things; it takes them all, so to speak, as independent substances which might exist by themselves, and whose relations to each other are external and accidental. It deals primarily with the finite, with the manifold forms of existence which limit, and are limited by each other in space and time; or, if it rises to the eternal and infinite, it is only as to something beyond and far away—something that is not present in experience, but which the limitations and imperfections of experience make us suspect or aspire to, a transcendent something, which we can neither name nor define except as the opposite of the finite. The religious consciousness is the direct antithesis of this way of thinking. It, so to speak, turns the tables upon the whole secular system of thought, beginning where it ends and ending where it begins, "burning what it adores and adoring what it burns," denying or treating as phenomenal and illusive what it regards as most real and certain, and regarding as the first principle of knowledge and reality what to it is the vaguest of abstractions. In other words, the first

concern of religion is not with the difference of things from each other, and from the subject that knows them, but with the unity that underlies all these differences. It demands that we should not regard the whole as the sum of the parts or particular existences presented to us one by one in our ordinary experience, but rather that we should regard the parts as having a dependent and derived life, which cannot for one moment be severed from the life of the whole, or from the principle of reality which reveals itself therein. If, therefore, it does not deny all reality or independence to the finite, yet it looks first and last to God as the unity from which all comes, to which all tends, and in which all is contained. In its conception of things it takes its stand not at the point of view of any one of them, but at the point of view of the universal principle, in relation to which they are and are known. The language of the natural man—if we may use that expression for the man whose thoughts and feelings are least influenced by religion—would be something like this: "I know most surely and certainly the things which I can see and handle, the outward objects I apprehend through my senses; I also know, in a way, the self within me—though about the soul or self there is something dark and mysterious whenever I try to realise its nature as other, and yet not other, than the body. But when I seek to rise above myself and the objects

I perceive, and to think of a Being who is neither the one nor the other, and yet somehow is the source and end of both, I seem to lose all solid basis either for knowledge or belief, and to be trying to give substance to a dream." On the other hand, the language of the man who looks at the world with the eyes of religion must rather be something like this: "I may be deceived, and am often deceived, as to the things without me, which at best are ever passing and changing. Of the self within me I have a more stable consciousness, as bound up with all that I know or feel, and as the source of a moral ideal which I cannot but regard as absolute; but even the self seems to escape me when I think of the limits of my earthly existence and of the rapid alternations of my thoughts and feelings. Of one thing, however, I am sure, of the abiding presence and reality that holds together all the shifting phases of the outer and the inner life, of the all-embracing, all-sustaining unity in which I and all things 'live and move and have our being.' Though all else should fail me, I am certain of God." The religious consciousness, therefore, overturns all ordinary standards of value, and sets up a new standard in their place, a standard derived, not from any one finite existence or end, but from the relation of all finite existences and ends to the infinite. For, if the thought of God be admitted at all, it must claim

everything for itself, and can leave nothing for Cæsar or for any other power. It cannot but demand that we should both understand and estimate everything else in relation to it, that all our knowledge of the universe should ultimately be brought to a focus in the knowledge of God, and that all the objects of our will should be valued only as means to the realisation of God in the world.

Now, it may be said, in objection to this view, that such a complete religious inversion of our ordinary consciousness of reality, such a 'transvaluation of all values' in the light of the infinite, goes very far beyond what we find in many religions, and that, indeed, it is a rare phenomenon even in the highest religion we know. In many religions God seems hardly to be regarded as an absolute being at all, but rather to be identified with some finite object or objects, or at least with some such object idealised, transfigured and lifted by imagination above the ordinary levels of finitude. And even when a more spiritual conception of divinity is attained, yet the relation of the individual to his God often takes a form which seems greatly to fall short of any such consciousness as I have described. It seems to be rather the relation of weak creatures to one who is far stronger than they, and from whom, therefore, they have much to hope and to fear—a relation which, even when it takes the form of

admiration and love, is still analogous to the dependence of one finite being upon another, and not the unique consciousness in a finite creature of his union with the Infinite, in whom he loses, and in whom alone he can find himself.

Such objections can be met, in the first place, by showing that the religious consciousness, as the consciousness of the whole to which we belong, and of the supreme reality of the principle of unity in that whole, is involved in all our consciousness of the universe and of ourselves: and in the second place, that this principle, though involved in all our thought and activity, is for that very reason the last to be clearly apprehended by us. Aristotle's assertion that that which is first in nature is last in time, has its highest exemplification here. In the history of man religion does not at first reveal itself in that which is its true or adequate form. It represents God purely as an object or purely as a subject, as manifesting Himself purely without, or again purely within us, before it rises to the consciousness of God as God, the one principle of all knowledge and reality. Yet, even from an early period the true idea is silently working under the imperfect forms of its expression, and giving indications of itself in many ways, especially in the language of worship; for, under the sway of religious emotion, the individual is often carried beyond the limits of his ordinary

thought. And the whole history of the evolution of religion is a record of the process whereby it gradually reveals what was latent in it from the beginning and finds ever better ways of representing its object, and whereby these again react in producing a truer relation of the individual to that object, as the principle of his own life and of the life of all things.

Such considerations—which I have dealt with more fully in another course of lectures [1]—may be sufficient to meet the difficulty of recognising in the various forms of religion what I have asserted to be the principle that underlies them all, and is more or less distinctly expressed in every one of them. Here, however, we have to deal not with religion but with theology, the science or philosophy of religion. And theology, as we have seen, is just religion brought to self-consciousness, and endeavouring reflectively to criticise and interpret its own unconscious processes. Theology begins, therefore, as soon as the immediate process of religious life, the direct movement by which our minds rise to the consciousness of God, ceases to be sufficient for itself. In other words, it begins when the mind turns back upon itself to question the results of its own spontaneous activity. Here, as elsewhere, science arises in doubt, a doubt which makes the mind retrace in reflective

[1] *The Evolution of Religion*, I, Lect. 7.

thought the path in which it has been led by its first imaginative intuitions of truth, and ask whether it can justify in whole or in part the results at which it has arrived. And the question thus raised is one that brings with it more searching of heart than any other which arises in the transition from intuition to reflexion, from the ordinary consciousness to science. For religion does not affect merely one aspect of life or one department of things. A man's real religion, whatever he may profess, is the summed-up product of all his experience, the ultimate attitude of thought and feeling and will, into which he is thrown by his intercourse with the world. And though this attitude of mind is, in the main, due to the working of what we call unconscious reason, yet the whole nature of man as a rational being comes into play in producing it. Hence the awaking of conscious reason to sift and criticise religion, must bring with it a more serious disturbance of the existence of man than any other critical reaction of thought upon life. It must give rise to a movement of doubt and denial, and ultimately to a sifting process which, even if it restores the fundamental principles of earlier faith, yet inevitably makes great changes in its form, and rejects so much that had formerly seemed essential, that sometimes it is difficult to detect the identity which maintains itself through the change.

Now, this remark has a special application to the development of theology in Greece. The religion of Greece, indeed, especially in its later humanised polytheism, marks a great advance in the spiritual history of man, a higher appreciation both of his own nature and of his relations to the world than can be discerned in earlier religions. Greek mythology, as it appears in Homer, in Pindar, and in the Tragedians, already shows the same freedom of spirit, the same large outlook upon the facts of human life and destiny, which at a later time manifested itself in the speculations of its philosophers. The Greek poets, indeed, wielded their imaginative symbols so freely, as a means of expressing all their thoughts and feelings, that the mythology they created or remoulded is like a collection of transparent allegories, through which spiritual truth is conveyed; and it was but a short step for the philosophers who came after them, to drop the symbols altogether and adopt the abstract language of thought. At the same time the imaginative form of Greek mythology exposed it in a peculiar way to the attacks of scepticism, so soon as the intellect of Greece had awakened to the distinction of poetry from prose. The delicate moonlit web of poetic fiction which the Greek imagination had woven around the crude naturalism of pre-historic religion, insensibly softening, colouring, and idealising it, could

not maintain itself in the daylight of a critical age. Hence, at least in all the educated classes, there was a rapid collapse of faith; and philosophy seemed to have had thrown upon it the task, not only of interpreting religion, but, as it were, of providing a new religion out of itself. Bacon declares that with the ancients moral philosophy took the place of theology: he should rather have said that it tried to supply the want caused by the failure of popular religion. Indeed, the greatest of all the differences between the religious development of Greece and that of Christendom lies just in this, that, in the former philosophy at once breaks away from the tutelage of faith and asserts its independence, nay, claims to provide the only true basis on which the moral and spiritual life can be supported; whereas, in the latter, there is a long period during which philosophy remains strictly the *ancilla fidei*; and when it emancipates itself, it cannot be said, even with those who are most influenced by philosophical reflexion, to substitute itself for the religion of faith, but only to seek a rational basis for it, and to subject it to a sifting criticism.

A consideration of these facts enables us to make a preliminary division of the field which a complete history of theology would have to traverse, and to distinguish three main periods in that history, namely, the period of Greek and Roman antiquity,

the Christian era down to the Reformation, and the modern period. In these lectures I shall confine myself almost entirely to the first of those periods; but it may do something to put our enquiries in their proper setting if we begin by sketching out, in however imperfect a way, the whole field of investigation.

In the first period, the period of Greek and Roman antiquity, philosophy is almost absolutely free, hardly even troubled by any counter-claim of authority, in its attempts to discover the nature of things and of the Being in whom all reality centres. The poetic conceptions of early religion could not, as I have said, stand for a moment the shock of criticism. Sometimes, indeed, we find early philosophers treating mythology as an allegory of the higher truth which is expressed in their own doctrine, while at other times they attacked it as untrue, or set it aside as irrelevant. Seldom or never do we find them treating it as having any value in itself. And if Plato recognises that some other kind of teaching than that given by philosophy is necessary for men in the earlier stage of their intellectual and moral education—necessary for all in whom the power of philosophical reflexion has not been, or cannot be developed—yet he regards the actual mythology as altogether unfit for such a purpose, and looks for the creation of a

purified body of myths which should convey a better ethical lesson. And, on the other side, closely as religion was bound up with the political life of Greece, we hear of very few attempts to interfere with the freedom of speculation to criticise and refute it. The attack made upon Anaxagoras for the impiety of his physical theories was really aimed at Pericles, whose friend he was. And Socrates is the only martyr of philosophy in the ancient world, the only man who can be said to have suffered for the freedom of thought. After his time philosophy became the natural refuge of all those whose spiritual needs could not be satisfied by the decaying superstitions of the ancient world. The decline of that independent political life of cities, with which the religion of Greece had been so closely connected, deprived that religion of half its meaning; and under the empire of Rome the educated classes in ever-increasing numbers found moral support and guidance in the teaching of one or other of the philosophical schools. It is true that to a certain extent the Stoics, and to a still greater extent the Neo-Platonists, endeavoured by an allegorising method to revive in some degree the life of mythology, and even to find some rational meaning in the ritual and ceremony of popular religion. And there were some in later times, among whom the most celebrated is the Emperor

Julian, who took seriously this curious amalgam of philosophy and superstition. But, at the most, it could only be said that philosophy patronised the popular religion, and not that it formed a real alliance with it, still less paid to it any real deference.

It may then safely be said that ancient philosophy was, at once and almost without effort, free. If it owed much to the religion from which it emerged, it was hardly at all conscious of the debt. And perhaps its imperfection was partly due to the very ease with which it won its freedom. In spiritual things the greatness of the price we pay, has much to do with the value of the good we acquire. And one consequence of the facility with which criticism disposed of the primitive faiths of the ancient world was, that the purely intellectual life, the life of philosophical reflexion, tended too much to withdraw upon itself and to disconnect itself from the life of feeling and impulse, to break away, in short, from the unconscious basis out of which the life of consciousness arises. This exaltation of conscious as opposed to unconscious reason begins with Socrates, who in teaching that 'virtue is knowledge' seemed to cast contempt on any virtue which is not the product of distinct reflexion upon the ends of human existence, any virtue that depends upon rule and habit, or upon the influence of society in drawing

out and disciplining the moral energies of man. And though, as we shall see, this defect was partly corrected by Plato and Aristotle, who laid increasing weight upon habit and social training, yet these great writers repeated the same error in a more dangerous form, when they exalted the intellectual above the practical life, and treated the former as that in which alone man could be said to rise into unity with the divine. Against this undue exaltation of the intellect there is a partial reaction in the later schools of the Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics, in which the guidance of practical life again becomes the great object of philosophy. But this change is less important than it seems. For in these schools ethics was almost entirely divorced from the wider social interests with which in earlier times it had been concerned, and confined to a consideration of the ways in which the inner independence and harmony of the individual soul might be maintained. The Roman Empire, while establishing outward order and organisation of life among all the races submitted to its rule, had exercised a disintegrating influence upon all the social and political bonds that had hitherto held them together. And philosophy could only accept the result and endeavour to fortify the individual man in his isolation, and to bestow upon him that strength of heart and moral self-sufficiency of which he was in need.

Hence, even more than Socrates, the Stoics and Epicureans tend to concentrate attention upon the inner life, as a sphere to be regulated by conscious reason and deliberate purpose; and they show even less respect than he did for the movements of natural feeling and immediate impulse. Their philosophical religion is a creation of abstract thought which hardly attempts to connect itself with experience, or to find any interpretation of it. Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius live in an ideal world, which they hold, indeed, to be the only reality, but which they hardly attempt to bring into any rational connexion with the facts of their external lives. They are optimists, who yet take an almost pessimistic view of the actual conditions of existence in which they find themselves. Their philosophy is rather a refuge from the confusion and evil they see around them than a means of removing the appearance of confusion by throwing upon it the light of a higher truth. They seek not to overcome the world but to make themselves indifferent to it. And with the Neo-Platonists, the last of the Greek schools of philosophy, this tendency to withdraw from life and all its problems becomes still more marked. The higher claims of contemplation, which had been asserted by Plato and Aristotle, are again put forward and in a still more exclusive sense; for while Plato and Aristotle sought to bring

all nature and all the interests of human life within the scope of philosophy, and had made theology only the culminating phase of science which brings all its varied results to a final unity, with the Neo-Platonists this unity becomes in itself the main and, we might almost say, the sole object of interest. Thus theology, absorbing the whole life of philosophy, is emptied of its contents, or rather has for its whole content the bare idea of religion. That idea, indeed, is expressed in Plotinus with a depth and comprehensiveness which has hardly anywhere else been equalled; but we might perhaps say that with him the idea swallows up the reality. Man is left, as it were, alone with God, without any world to mediate between them, and in the ecstatic vision of the Absolute the light of reason is extinguished.

It appears, then, that in ancient philosophy thought is free; but, as it did not pay 'a great price' for its freedom, as it gained that freedom without any hard struggle with faith and social authority, its emancipation made it lose hold of reality. It tended in the end to an exclusive intellectualism, in which the form of thought was opposed to the matter, and the actual world was not idealised or spiritualised, but rather condemned as unideal and unspiritual. Nevertheless, the debt of philosophy and theology to Greek thought is incalculable. It first distinctly lifted man above

vague wonder at a universe he could not comprehend, and gave him courage to define and to measure, to distinguish and to relate, all the forms of his inward and outward life. It first made him ask distinct questions of experience, and taught him the methods by which he could hope to answer them. It first attempted to name and to determine the categories or forms of thought under which we have to bring all things, if we would seek to understand their nature and to exhibit their relations to each other. Finally—what is most important in relation to our subject—it first sought to grasp and verify that idea of the ultimate unity of all things, which lies at the basis of all religion. It thus laid down the indispensable presuppositions of all later theological thought, and developed that flexible language of reflexion in which alone its ideal relations could be expressed. If the Roman empire, by the peace which its organised rule secured, the *pacis Romanae majestas*, provided the external conditions under which Christianity could advance to the conquest of civilised mankind, the philosophy of Greece provided the inward conditions whereby its ideas could be interpreted and brought into that systematic form which was necessary to secure their permanent influence upon the human mind.

The second stage in the evolution of theology is that in which the conceptions and methods of Greek

philosophy were used to formulate and interpret the new ideas as to the nature of God and man and their relations to each other, which were involved in, or suggested by, the facts of the life of Christ and the spiritual experiences of His followers. To a certain extent the two stages overlap one another; for Christianity had begun to be developed into a dogmatic system long before Neoplatonic thought had received its culminating expression in Plotinus. The characteristic attitude of theology during this whole period is directly the reverse of that which had prevailed during the first period; for whereas in the first period philosophical reflexion was hardly conscious of limitation by any authority, and had not in any way to yield to the immediate claims of the religious consciousness, in the whole period of the evolution of Christian doctrine down to the Reformation philosophy is in a strictly subordinate position. In the early Christian centuries its influence is very great, and, indeed, can hardly be exaggerated; but it was not recognised. The Fathers did not seem to themselves to be actively developing a system of doctrine, but simply to be handing down the faith once delivered to the saints; and, though in the Scholastic period philosophy was recognised to have a place of its own, it was strictly that of an instrument to analyse and explain doctrines which were accepted as true on the authority of the Church. While, therefore, there is

a real evolution of doctrine, involving great activity of thought and many changes in the interpretation of the fundamental ideas of Christianity, the prevailing view of theologians was that they were simply maintaining an immovable truth; and that, if they had made any alteration in its expression, it was merely of a formal kind, which had no effect upon the substance of the faith. Only once, in the Alexandrian school of theologians, did philosophical reflexion gain a certain independence, and even claim to be a higher way of apprehending the truth; but this was a passing phase in the early history of the Church.

The result of this process was that each doctrine, as it established itself as one of the articles of faith, tended to become fixed and fossilised, and ceased to have the power of growth; and the new life of thought seemed rather to transfer itself to fresh questions than to deepen and reinterpret the results already attained. Hence, though we can trace a rational process of development and a real movement of intelligence in the successive steps by which Christianity defined itself, yet this is disguised and to a great extent deprived of its value by the mode in which it took place. For, on the one hand, reason can never show its real power in servitude, or when its weapons are used by those who are not fully conscious of their nature. The conceptions of Plato and Aristotle, of the Stoics and Neo-Platonists, as

employed by those in whom the genuine life of Greek thought was no longer present and who could not criticise the ideas they were using, were often combined in an external and mechanical way with the data supplied by Christian life and experience. And, on the other hand, it has to be remembered that these conceptions themselves contained elements that were essentially alien and even hostile to the matter to which they were applied. The consequence was that the movement of theological thought became more forced, unnatural, and fictitious the farther it advanced, till it ended in the production of the great Scholastic systems—systems in which compromise and balance take the place of organic unity, and arguments for foregone conclusions are substituted for scientific or philosophical investigation. Scholastic theology really deserves the character which Mommsen has attributed to all theology: it is "the bastard child of faith and reason." It is the extreme manifestation at once of the slavery of reason and of the necessary recoil of reason against that which has enslaved it. The effort to confine the intelligence to the task of analysing data which it is not allowed to examine, and of arguing from premises which it may not question, could only end in making it rationalistic, sceptical, and even destructive. And the Scholastic, while seeming to himself only to be analysing the doctrine of Christianity, really dissected it, and turned it from

a living truth into a dead body of dogma. Finally, the Nominalism of the age before the Reformation practically showed that the Scholastic method was fatal to a Christian, and even to a religious view of life, and made it necessary in the interest of philosophy and theology itself that the long divorce of faith and reason should come to an end.

What we find, then, in this second period of the history of theology is an external combination of religion with philosophy, and the production of a system of dogma in which the ideas and methods evolved by the free speculation of Greece were used to express and interpret the new principle of Christianity. But the results of such an artificial process, in which the form of thought was derived from one source and the matter from another, were necessarily very inadequate, and could have only a provisional value. It was inevitable in the long run that the reflective power, called forth by this imperfect attempt to work out the consequences of the new view of life, should turn against its own products. It was inevitable that modern philosophy, which had grown to maturity under the tutelage of the Church, should reassert the ancient freedom of Greek speculation, and again endeavour to interpret for itself the widening experience of humanity. And this movement of renewal and revival, or, as it is called, *Renaissance,* soon extended also to religious

experience, when the Reformers, setting aside the whole system of thought and life which the medieval Church had built upon the foundation of Christianity, tried to put themselves again in direct contact with the life and teaching of Christ.

The Reformation, indeed, was far from being, in the first instance, an assertion of those claims of reason which Scholasticism had discredited; but it contained the germ of a reconciliation between the two factors of man's life, which in the medieval Church had been opposed to each other; for it demanded a faith which should not be the acceptance of the dictates of an outward authority, but the spiritual apprehension of Christianity by each man for himself. Such a faith was really, what a faith in authority could never become, a *fides quaerens intellectum*, a faith that had in itself the necessity of its own development into reason. And when Descartes put forward his maxim: *De omnibus dubitandum est*, and sought to restore philosophy to its rights, as an investigation into truth without any presuppositions, he was really proclaiming that the era of compromise—of the blending of incongruous elements derived from different sources, or of an external truce between opposite principles—was at an end; and that the form and matter of thought must henceforth be derived from the same source, and brought into complete unity with each other. Hence modern philosophy, and the theology

or view of 'the highest things,' in which it culminates, is, like Greek philosophy, free speculation. It deals with religion, as it deals with the other experiences of life, which it tries with perfect impartiality and disinterestedness to interpret. And when any attempt has been made to limit its freedom, it has reasserted itself in a sceptical and even a revolutionary spirit against all dogma whatsoever, and even against Christianity itself, so far as it was identified with dogma.

It could not, however, permanently retain such a merely negative attitude. Nor could it fall back upon that indifference to popular religion, which was the general characteristic of the Greek philosophers. It found itself in the presence of a religious experience, which had a far richer content than that of the Greeks, and it was forced to seek for some explanation of that experience. It had to deal with a religion which was not bound up with the peculiarities of any special age or nation, but which from the first has breathed the atmosphere of universality—a religion which found its immediate expression, not in a fanciful mythology, but in a life lived under human conditions and carried through suffering and death to a spiritual triumph. It could not escape into abstraction from the influence of this great fact, and of all the experiences to which in the history of humanity it has given rise. Nor could it hope

to discover the ultimate reality of things by withdrawing into the inner life, or by losing all the manifold forms of existence, like Plotinus, in a mystic unity. It was committed to the hard task of idealising a world which in its first aspect seems to know nothing of the ideal; of taking away the commonness of life by the power of a more comprehensive vision, and finding the key to its discords in a harmony which realises itself through them. It had to seek the essential means for the realisation of its ideal in that very chance and contingency of life, which the greatest of ancient philosophers regarded as inexplicable, or as the result of that external necessity which clings to all finite existence. In Christianity we might say that religion was for the first time brought face to face with the whole problem of the world in its vastness and universality, and at the same time in all its complexity of individual concrete detail. It had to idealise life and death, and in a certain sense even sin and evil, and to attain to a more real optimism through the lowest depths ever fathomed by pessimism. And philosophical reflexion upon such a religion was bound to follow in its footsteps, to face the same difficulties, and find by its own methods a way to the same or to a better solution of them. Hence modern philosophy, though in its earlier stages—in the effort to assert its own freedom and to establish the first basis of an intelligible

view of the universe—it tended rather to withdraw from the whole sphere of religious thought, and even to regard it with hostility, has been obliged by the necessity of its own development more and more definitely to take cognisance of the Christian system of thought and life. It has been obliged to consider whether in its own way and by its own methods it can reinterpret and justify the thorough-going and fearless idealism and optimism of the founder of Christianity, while bringing it in relation to the whole results of modern life and science. This aspect of its work has gained greater prominence since the days of Kant, in the great speculative movement which he initiated at the end of the eighteenth century. And if it be true that during the course of last century there has been a partial reaction from the premature attempt then made to snatch at the fruits of philosophy before they were quite ripe, I think it may fairly be said that in its later years, after all the great development of science, especially of biological and historical science, there has been a return upon the methods and principles of idealism which, if it be characterised by greater caution, is perhaps on that account the more likely to bring about a permanent result.

LECTURE THIRD.

THE PRECURSORS OF PLATO.

In the last lecture I suggested that Plato is the first systematic theologian, the first philosopher who distinctly grasped the idea that lies at the root of all religion, and used it as the key to all the other problems of philosophy. Or, if this statement require some qualification, we may at least say that he is the philosopher to whom all *our* theology may be traced back, and to whom it owes most. Emerson once said that Plato's *Dialogues* were the Bible of educated men; and if by this he meant that from them the reflective consciousness has drawn its greatest nutriment and support, it is not too much to say of the writings of one who is the fountain-head of idealistic, we might even say of ideal, views of life. Plato has done more than any other writer to fill both poetry and philosophy with the spirit of religion, to break the yoke of custom and tradition "heavy as frost and deep almost as life," which

cramps the development of man's mind, to liberate him from the prejudices of the natural understanding, and to open up to him an ideal world in which he can find refuge from the narrowness and inadequacy of life. In the Terrestrial Paradise, on the summit of the Purgatorial mount, Dante is made to drink of the waters of Lethe to wash away from his memory all his earthly cares and sins, and then of the waters of Eunoe to refresh and strengthen his spirit for the vision of the heavens. Plato's writings may be said to be Lethe and Eunoe in one, at once the liberation of thought from that which is limited and temporary, and its initiation into a new ideal way of conceiving the world. To put it more directly, Plato is the source of two great streams of theological thought which have flowed through all the subsequent literature of religion down to the present time. On the one hand, we may find in him the source, or at least one of the sources, of that spirit of mysticism which seeks to merge the particular in the universal, the temporal in the eternal, and ultimately to lose the intelligible world and the intelligence in an absolute divine unity; a spirit which, through the Neo-Platonists, has exercised a very powerful influence upon the thought of Christendom, sometimes deepening and elevating it, though, on the whole, tending to give it a false direction. But Plato is also the main source of that

idealism which is the best corrective of mysticism, the idealism which seeks not merely to get away from the temporal and the finite, but to make them intelligible; not to escape from immediate experience into an ideal world in comparison with which it is a shadow and a dream, but to find the ideal in the world of experience itself, underlying it, and giving a new meaning to all its phenomena. These two tendencies conflict in Plato, as in subsequent philosophy and theology, and if we cannot say that in his writings their conflict comes to a definite issue, or results in the final victory of the more comprehensive view, yet the very statement of the alternative was of immense importance in the history of religious thought, and makes the study of Plato essential to any one who would understand its development.

There is always an element of illusion in the attempt to sum up the thought of a great writer in a few words of definition. But I may give a succinct view of Plato's work, and at the same time prepare the way for a more detailed statement, if I say that there are two principles or tendencies the union or coalescence of which gives its distinctive character to the Platonic philosophy. In the first place, his thought is always moving from the particular to the universal, from the part to the whole; he is constantly endeavouring to show the

relative and illusive nature of the former as separated from the latter, and to reach a principle of unity deeper than all the differences of thought and things, a principle on which they depend and in relation to which alone they can be understood. And, in the second place, he is bent on establishing an ideal or spiritual conception of this principle of unity; or, in other words, on proving that thought or mind is the ultimate ground, at once the first and the final cause, of all reality. Now, in the former of these points, Plato is following up a line of thought which had been marked out by the earlier Greek philosophers, while in the latter he was giving a deeper meaning and a wider scope to an idea which he had derived from his master, Socrates. It will therefore be necessary for the interpretation of Plato to go back for a little upon his predecessors.

The conception of an absolute principle of unity in the universe which is deeper than any of the special forms of existence, was the earliest thought of Greek philosophy; but it was not clearly grasped before Xenophanes, who first set the permanent unity of all things in opposition to all their diversity and change. Xenophanes very naturally expressed this thought in an attack upon the anthropomorphism of Greek mythology, which he regarded as an illegitimate attempt to raise one particular kind of being, one of the forms of

the finite, into the place which could be given only to the Absolute. "There is one God, greatest of all gods and men, who is like to mortal creatures neither in form nor in mind." It is man's petty ambition and vanity that makes him think of God as such an one as himself, and, "if the oxen or the lions had hands and were able to paint pictures or carve out statues like men, they would have given their own forms to the gods." We have here a criticism of the humanised Polytheism of Greece, a criticism which rests on the basis of an abstract Pantheism and repudiates the idea of giving any form whatsoever to the absolute Being, even the form of man himself. In other words, we have here the idea of God as the mere negation of the finite—an idea which could not be adequately represented in mythology; though we may find a partial expression of it in the Homeric representation of fate as a power beyond the gods. In the apparently antagonistic philosophy of Heraclitus we have what is really another aspect of the same idea: for the endless flux of the particular forms of the finite, whose existence is nothing but the process whereby they pass away and merge in each other, is but the opposite counterpart of the changeless unity of the whole. "The One remains, the many change and pass." The Heraclitean philosophy exhibits what has been

called the "dialectic of the finite," or, in other words, its self-contradiction when taken by itself: and this, as we have seen, is just the dialectic of the religious consciousness, by which it is lifted from the particular to the universal, from the transitory to the eternal, from the finite to the infinite. Take any partial or limited existence, take even matter or mind in its abstraction, and we find that the idea of it ultimately breaks down and carries us beyond itself, and that to treat it as a self-determined whole, an absolutely independent substance, involves a contradiction; in other words, we cannot think it at all except as transitory and changing. And what makes this movement of thought real for the common consciousness, even where its logical necessity is not reflected upon, is that the very existence of a finite being is found to be the process of its dissolution. "The process of its life is the process of its death." This lesson is brought home to everyone by the experience of a life, which is lived under the shadow of death, and in which everything inward and outward seems to be perpetually slipping away from us. But the Greek mind was specially open to this pathos of finite existence, just because of its keen sensitiveness to its joys. The refrain of mortality is continually appearing even in the earliest song of Homer with all its fresh delight in the beauty of life: and as reflexion deepened, it

seemed to the Greeks only to disclose more distinctly—beyond all the brightness of earthly existence and even beyond all the beautiful forms of the gods of Olympus—the harshness of an inexorable law of destiny.

Now, the first reading of this lesson of the vanity of all finite things tends to carry the mind to the idea of an Absolute in which all is lost and nothing is found again; from mere change and multiplicity to mere permanence and unity, from the nothingness of the finite world to a God who is only its negation. From this point of view we may recognise the philosophies of Xenophanes and Heraclitus as half-thoughts, each of which finds its complement in the other, the whole thought which arises out of their recombination being just that conception of an absolute unity mediated by the negation of all difference and change, which we have already recognised as the basis of all theology.

This, then, is the first of the two characteristic elements in the philosophy of Plato. But so far we have only a pantheistic unity, a principle of unity which is negatively related to all things, and which therefore cannot be properly conceived as an ideal or spiritual, any more than it can properly be conceived as a material principle. The second element, the idealistic or spiritualistic element, in the Platonic thought is derived, mainly if not entirely, from

Socrates. It is true that Anaxagoras first referred the order of the universe to a rational principle, when he said that "all things were in chaos till reason came to arrange them"; but apparently all he meant was that the world is a system capable of being understood, because the connexion of its parts is determined by definite laws, and not that, as a whole, it is a manifestation of reason, or a system in which the highest good is realised. It was Socrates who first reached the conception of such a system. In a passage in the *Memorabilia*[1] he is represented as declaring that, just as the substances that go to constitute man's body are derived from the material world, so his mind is a little ray of intelligence drawn from the great soul of the universe. Socrates then proceeds to give expression to a few of the ordinary arguments from design, based mainly on the adaptation of man's environment to his needs or of his physical organism to the purposes it has to subserve. It is clear, therefore, that if Socrates had attempted to construct any system of nature, he would have adopted a teleological view of things in which God would have been conceived as a designer working with conscious purpose to realise an end, and that end the happiness of his creatures and especially of man. In short, Socrates, in so far as he attempted

[1] *Mem.*, I, 4, 8.

a theory of the universe at all, was disposed to think of it in the same way as he thought of the moral life of man. But he rather put aside all such ambitious designs and, except in this one place, he is represented as confining himself entirely to the sphere of ethics. And even ethics was for him not so much a science, as an art of life.

Socrates was thus, as it were, a philosopher by accident, one who took to philosophy to satisfy not a speculative but a practical want. Living in an age of enlightenment, an age when the old guides of life, religion and law and custom, were losing their hold upon the mind of man, he was compelled to find a substitute for them by reflexion upon the meaning and object of human existence. Hence he is the prophet of clear self-consciousness, who takes the Delphic epigram, 'Know thyself,' as his motto, and maintains that virtue must always be founded on such knowledge. For him the great source of error and evil is want of thought—that men go on living without considering the meaning and value of life, or asking themselves what good they expect to get out of their existence as a whole. Hence, though their wish is for the good—and, strictly speaking, no one can wish for anything else—they neither know what the good is, nor where to find it, and they blunder on from day to day, taking anything that attracts them for

the good which they really desire. The aim of Socrates is to awake men to a realisation of what they are, and what therefore they must seek, if they would make the best of their existence and find satisfaction for themselves. Morality, he contends, is nothing but the art of living, and the conditions of success in it are like those of any other art. Now, every kind of art, whether mechanical or fine art, has to prescribe a definite course of conduct in which actions are regulated with reference to an end; and it therefore involves a clear consciousness of that end, and of the means whereby it is to be attained. But while no one would attempt to practise any common art without such knowledge, in the greater art of living men constantly act in this way, without asking themselves what they are living for, or whether the particular actions they do are fitted to secure it.

Is there then no end at all for human life, no good which it may be expected to secure for him who uses it aright? To suppose that this is so, is to forget that in all our ethical judgments, in all our expressions of moral approval or disapproval, in all our characterisation of actions as good or bad, we presuppose that there is such an end; and that it is the standard to which we are bound to bring our lives, and by which we must estimate their worth. But this

general acknowledgment is fruitless, because no attempt is made to realise what such language really means. It is supposed that everyone knows, and just for that reason no one enquires; but so long as no one enquires, it is impossible that ignorance can be removed, or that any remedy can be applied to the ills which ignorance brings with it.

Hence the first demand of Socrates is for ethical reflexion and investigation. *ὁ ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ*:[1] "a life without criticism, or reflexion upon the meaning of life, is unworthy of a man": it is rather the life of an irrational animal. For 'virtue is knowledge,' both in the negative sense that there can be no virtue without knowledge, and in the positive sense that, if knowledge is attained, virtue must follow. As to the former of these senses, Socrates maintains that he who is not conscious of the good, or does not know in what it consists, cannot possibly pursue it, or even consider the means whereby it is to be attained. If a virtuous life is a moral work of art in which every part is determined by the idea of the whole, it is impossible that it should be realised except by one who has that idea. It is possible that the particular actions done by an individual without any knowledge of the good may be similar to those which he would have had to do in

[1] *Apologia*, 38 A.

order to attain it; but they will not really have the same character as if they were so done. Indeed, as not being done with a view to the good, they will have the character of vice. "He who is courageous without knowledge is courageous by a kind of cowardice: he who is temperate without knowledge is temperate by a kind of intemperance." On the other hand, if men are once awakened to a consciousness of their real good, how can they do otherwise than pursue it? "We needs must love the highest when we see it." In all that we seek, what we really wish to find is the good; and if it be once revealed to us, if we are enabled to see through the illusions which make us mistake something else for it, we must pursue it and it alone. It is just because men are blind, because "they know not what they do," that they are led away from the right path; and if we can awake them to reflexion, we shall have laid the foundation for their moral regeneration.

The first step, therefore, is to make men conscious of their ignorance, *i.e.* not merely of ignorance in general, but of ignorance of that in which they continually regard themselves as wise. For every moral judgment, every judgment with such predicates as just, unjust, temperate, intemperate, right, wrong, involves such a claim to ethical knowledge; yet this claim is found to be invalid and baseless so soon as those who confidently use such general terms are

called upon to define or explain them. The aim of the Socratic interrogation was, therefore, in the first place, to awake a consciousness that knowledge was wanting, and that without it men were like vessels without rudder or steersman; and, secondly, to teach them the method of reflexion and investigation by which alone such ignorance could be removed. To find what is meant by the moral universals, the words of ethical import which we are continually using, above all to define 'the chief good,' to which all such words point as their ultimate basis, is the great object of all theory, as to realise it in our lives is the great object of all practice. Thus a virtuous life is for Socrates a life in which every thought and feeling, every impulse and action, is regulated in view of that good which man's nature fits him to realise and enjoy. And the first condition of such a life is that this good should be clearly defined, and that the means to it should be deliberately chosen. Whether the individual is a part of a wider teleological system or no, becomes thus for Socrates a secondary question; and what he is mainly interested to maintain is that each man for himself should work out such a system in his own life. Socrates thinks, indeed, that each individual, in achieving his own mission, will also be serving the State and realising the divine will; but his starting-point is individualistic and ethical, and the social and religious aspects of life fall into the background. He

does not bid men rebel against authority, but he finds the source and sanction of all authority not without but within, in the reason and reflexion of the individual. Let each man be man and master of himself knowing what he seeks in life and steadfastly seeking what he knows. This is to Socrates the *unum necessarium*, the first principle of ethics, the one condition of moral existence to which everything else is to be subordinate.

Now, the obvious criticism upon this view of moral life is that it would exclude the greater part of what we commonly call morality. For the virtue of childhood in all cases, and the virtue of most men throughout life, is not what Socrates demands, not the conscious pursuit of that which is recognised as the highest moral end; it is only the habitual practice of certain kinds of action which are accepted as good, the habitual obedience to certain rules which are regarded as right, without any reflexion upon the reasons why they are so regarded. Men from their earliest years are moralised by the silent influences of their social environment in the family and the State, aided by the sanctions of religion. But if, for a virtuous life, we demand a definite conception of the good of human existence and a definite regulation of all a man's ways by such a conception, we shall find very little virtue in the world, if indeed we can find any virtue at all. Comte said that the ideal of

a happy life was that the aspiration after some great object or achievement should be awakened in youth and gradually followed out to its completion in maturer years. But such a continuity of growing purpose is given to very few, and even to them it is not given in the definite form which Socrates seems to require. It is given rather as a dim anticipation which becomes clearer and clearer as the man advances toward its fulfilment, and which rises into perfect distinctness only when it has been attained. Thus life, even to those who realise most fully what their aims are, is a strangely mingled web of consciousness and unconsciousness, and the star which they follow is a light shining in darkness. "A good man," said Goethe, "in his dark strivings is somehow conscious of the right way"; while Oliver Cromwell, looking upon the opposite side of the shield, declared that "we never rise so high as when we do not know whither we are going." At least we may say that it is not given to any man to order his life from beginning to end with a clear knowledge of its meaning and purpose, and that action guided by conscious principle is rather the highest form to which morality rises than its normal type. Even Socrates himself may be quoted in the same sense; for he did not profess in all cases to guide his own life by ethical science, but fell back on what he called a divine voice that spoke within him, *i.e.* upon an unreasoned intui-

tive perception of what ought to be done, which he regarded as a kind of oracle of the gods.

The truth is that in the moral life we cannot draw a sharp line of division between consciousness and unconsciousness, or rather we must say that there are many grades of relative consciousness or unconsciousness; reaching down, on the one hand, to the mechanical observance of rules prescribed by an external authority; and up, on the other hand, to the full realisation of a universal principle as furnishing a guide in all the details of action. The child is, in the main, externally guided or constrained to practise certain habits and to obey certain rules; but these rules and habits have generally some *rationale* behind them, as being rules and habits which are needful to the maintenance of order in the society to which he belongs. And the intelligence of the child, while he is taught to observe them, does not remain entirely passive. What is commanded, so far as it has a rational meaning, commends itself to his reason and conscience, and helps to develop them. The rule from without is met by the 'greeting of the spirit' from within, and obedience is made easier by an awaking consciousness of its necessity. There is, no doubt, a long way from such dawning appreciation of the order to which his life is subjected to the full and loyal acceptance of it as his own law, and therefore as a law of liberty; and from

that again to a reflective consciousness of the universal principle that underlies all the particular rules, at once giving them their authority and limiting their application. Nor is it possible at any point in this advance to draw a sharp line of distinction between conscious and unconscious morality. Rather we might say that there is no stage at which morality is either completely conscious or completely unconscious; and that every stage may be called conscious in relation to the stage before it, and unconscious in relation to the stage after it. It is true, indeed, that the continuity of the moral life is sometimes interrupted by crises and even by revolutions, in which men seem to break away from their past and to make an entirely new beginning. There is such a thing as conversion. But such breaks are apt to be treated as more sharp and complete than they really are, and often—at least in cases where the individual has had any good social training—the main feature of the change is that he learns to realise the full meaning and spirit of the rules he has been taught to obey, and so vivifies the half-mechanical life of habit by the apprehension of the principle from which it derives its value. Thus revolution in individual as in national life is generally the culmination of a long process of preparation, like the lighting of the spark for which the explosive train has been laid ready, or, to use a better illustration,

like the first emergence of the plant from underground where its germinative forces have been slowly maturing.

We can see, however, that it was very natural for Socrates, as for other teachers in a similar position, to exaggerate the difference between conscious morality and that which is relatively unconscious. His whole purpose, his essential work and vocation, was to awaken men to reflexion, to arouse them to a clear consciousness of themselves, to call upon them to take life seriously and realise for themselves what they were to make of their lives. His attitude was like that of a modern religious teacher who is endeavouring to make men feel the necessity of acting from the highest principle; and who, in view of this object, is not careful to make a distinction between one who is outwardly respectable and satisfies the demands of the ordinarily accepted code of morals, and one who falls below that standard, or even one who is openly vicious. For what he seeks is not merely to make men act rightly, but to make them act upon the right motive; and he may even be inclined to accept the dangerous maxim that "whatever is not of faith is sin," and to treat the outwardly good and the outwardly bad as upon the same level, in so far as the former, no less than the latter, want that deep religious principle from which alone, in his view,

true moral life can spring. So it was with Socrates. No action seemed to him virtuous which was not based upon a knowledge of the ethical end, and he even asserted the paradox that it was better to do ill with knowledge than to do well without it. Nor does he seem to have allowed that there was any middle term between knowledge and ignorance, between the deliberate pursuit of the highest good and a life guided by casual impulses and mechanically accepted customs which are entirely without any moral value.

Such a view, however little Socrates might intend it, was essentially individualistic and unsocial in its effect. It set each man to think out the problem of life for himself; and if it did not put him in opposition to society, at least it made him regard his relations to it as secondary, and not as the essential basis of his moral existence. And from the point of view of a religion like that of Greece, which was essentially national (and even municipal) in its spirit, consecrating the City-state as a kind of church or divine institution, this was a profoundly irreligious attitude. Thus, literally and absolutely, Socrates was guilty of the charges which were brought against him. He "corrupted the youth and brought new gods into Athens," if it were corrupting the youth to teach them to set reason above authority, and if it were bringing new gods into

Athens to appeal to inward conviction as the one authentic voice of God. Hence also it was a natural result that many of the immediate followers of Socrates, the Minor Socratic schools as they are called, should have adopted a thorough-going individualism, which withdrew them from the community, and repudiated all its claims, as well as all the religious ideas that were connected therewith. Thus with them, as with some of the Sophists, the appeal to conscious reason took a distinctly revolutionary form, breaking the bonds of kindred and citizenship, and making the individual a law and an end to himself, independent at once of gods and men. This conception was developed in a hedonistic way by the Cyrenaics, who made pleasure, and even the pleasure of the moment, the end of all action: and it was developed by the Cynics in the direction of an asceticism which sought to secure the freedom of the individual by breaking all the ties which bind him to the things or beings that are without him. The Cynic philosophy, with its intolerance, its defiance of all law and authority, its revolutionary effort to liberate man by stripping him of every covering of his nakedness which civilisation or the customs and institutions of social life have provided, was the extreme form, we might say the *reductio ad absurdum*, of the Socratic idea of independence. And the Cyrenaic philosophy

seemed to reach the same result by showing that he who lives for himself must live for pleasure, and—since individual pleasures as such have no necessary unity or connexion—for the pleasure of the moment.

We have now considered the two main lines of speculation which contributed to the development of the Platonic philosophy. Plato, in fact, entered upon the whole inheritance of Greek thought, and his idealism was the result of a synthesis of all the tendencies that show themselves in it. In particular, to adopt a phrase of Green's, he read the earlier philosophers with the eyes of Socrates, and Socrates with the eyes of the earlier philosophers, and thus was enabled to rid himself of the presuppositions of both, and to reconstitute philosophy on a new basis. It was his great work to combine that idea of a fundamental principle of unity in all things, which inspired the earlier schools, with the Socratic conception of reason, as the one power which is able to produce order out of chaos and to reduce all the manifold and conflicting elements of reality to one self-consistent whole. This conception which Socrates had set before himself and his pupils as an ethical ideal, Plato treated as the master-key to the real nature not only of man, individual and social, but also of the whole universe. In doing so, he was led gradually to correct and supplement the errors and inadequacies

of the philosophy of Socrates—his abrupt and unmediated contrast of knowledge and ignorance, the indeterminateness of his conception of the good, his tendency to over-emphasise the subjective aspect of ethics and to withdraw the individual from the community, and man from the universe of which he is essentially a part. On the other hand, while thus freeing the ideas of Socrates from their onesidedness, Plato drew the Eleatic conception of the unity of all things out of its abstraction, and found in the teleological ideas of Socrates the means of combining it with the Heraclitean conception of manifoldness and change. He thus laid the foundations of idealistic philosophy for all subsequent times.

It will be my endeavour in the following lectures to show how these views are developed in the successive dialogues of Plato.

LECTURE FOURTH.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE PLATONIC IDEALISM.

We have seen that the Platonic philosophy in its most general aspect may be described as an extension to the universe of the principle which Socrates applied to the life of the individual man, and moreover that this extension was due mainly to the combination of Socratic ideas with ideas derived from the earlier philosophy of Greece. This general statement, however, true as it is, will not enable us to explain the distinctive character of Platonism, unless we follow out at least the main lines of development along which Plato's thought was carried as it absorbed these different elements. This mode of explanation has been made easier and more effective of late years since the order of the Platonic dialogues has been approximately determined by linguistic considerations irrespective even of the doctrines taught in them.

Following such indications we find that, as we might have expected, Plato is in the first instance

simply the pupil of Socrates, and that his earliest works are mainly devoted to the illustration of the Socratic method and the Socratic ideas. They deal, on the one hand, with the method of interrogation by which Socrates awakened in his pupils a consciousness of ignorance and then led them on to the formation of more and more comprehensive and exact definitions of moral conceptions; and, on the other hand, with the Socratic view of the moral life as a process determined by the idea of good as the end of action. In the course of these dialogues, however, Plato shows a growing sense of certain difficulties which beset the strict Socratic doctrine, and, in particular, of two great but closely connected difficulties, the one arising from the sharpness of the Socratic distinction between knowledge and ignorance, of which I have already spoken, and the other from the ambiguity and imperfection of the Socratic definition of the good which is the final end of action. Socrates, indeed, seemed to fix the nature of that end by the term *εὐδαιμονία*, commonly translated 'happiness'; but the various senses in which his teaching was understood by his disciples show that he did not anticipate or decide any of the controversies about the nature of happiness which arose among them; and, in particular, that he did not discuss the great question—whether happiness is to be found in activity or in feeling, in the exercise of

the faculties of man, or in the pleasure or satisfaction that follows upon such exercise.

Now to Plato that question became one of the most important of all ethical issues, and there was ultimately no ambiguity in his rejection of the purely hedonistic alternative. But there was a time when Hedonism seemed to him to afford the most natural interpretation of the Socratic theory that 'virtue is knowledge.' In the *Protagoras*, which is probably the latest of the Socratic dialogues, Socrates is made to maintain the doctrine afterwards called psychological Hedonism, that pleasure is the only possible object of desire, and that, when we seem to pursue any object which is not the most pleasant at the moment, it is only as an indirect means to greater pleasure in the future. On this view, it would follow that the difference between virtue and vice lies, not in our acting or not acting with a view to pleasure, but in the character of the pleasures we seek. The vicious man is he who is led by his short-sightedness to sacrifice a greater but remoter good to one that is nearer but less valuable; the virtuous man is he who has learned to look before and after, and to calculate the ultimate effect of each action in producing pleasure and pain. Such an ethical calculus alone, it is held, can raise men above the illusive appearance of the moment, and enable them to regulate their conduct in view of

the greatest pleasure in life as a whole. On the other hand, if we can so regulate our actions, we inevitably must do so; for, *ex hypothesi*, the only thing we can desire or will is pleasure, and when we know what course will bring us most pleasure, we necessarily follow it. In this sense, therefore, virtue is knowledge and vice ignorance, and the whole task of ethics is to furnish a relative estimate of the degree and quantity of pleasure to be derived from different objects.

But Plato has no sooner drawn out this hedonistic scheme of life than he begins to throw doubt upon it, both in itself and as an interpretation of the Socratic doctrine; and even in the very dialogue in which he sets it before us, he opposes to it another view, which he puts into the mouth of the Sophist Protagoras. Protagoras is made the representative of ordinary morality, which is based upon custom and opinion and not upon scientific reflexion; and in answer to the question of Socrates as to the way in which ethical truth is to be taught, he is made to maintain the thesis that it is not the subject of any special science but the product of a common instinct of humanity; and that therefore there are no special experts from whom it must be learnt, but that, in a sense, everybody teaches it to everybody. This idea is expressed in a sort of mythic apologue, in which the gods are described as making all mortal creatures

out of the elements, and then handing them over to Prometheus and Epimetheus to endow them with the qualities necessary for their preservation. It is agreed that Epimetheus shall make the distribution, and that Prometheus shall inspect and criticise the result. Epimetheus, therefore, gifts the animals with various powers—some with swiftness, some with size, some with strength, and so on, till he has exhausted all that he has to bestow. But then it is found that man has been left unprovided, a helpless, unarmed creature, whose existence is narrow and precarious; and Prometheus has to come to the rescue, and to steal from heaven fire and the arts that work by fire, as well as the art of weaving, to be the heritage of man. But even when so endowed, men are still left without the political art, the art of living together in peaceful co-operation; consequently they are involved in a continual struggle for existence against each other, and are in danger of being dispersed and destroyed by the other animals. But "Zeus, fearing that the entire race should be exterminated, comes to their aid, bringing with him reverence and justice (*αἰδώς* and *δίκη*) to be the ordering principles of cities and the bonds of friendship and conciliation." These principles, however, are not given like special talents to particular individuals, but shared among all; for "cities cannot subsist if a few only share in the virtues, as a few only have capacity for any special

art": civil society, therefore, must be protected by the law that "he who has no part in justice or reverence shall be put to death as a plague to the State."[1] Hence it is that, when men consult together upon matters that fall under the particular arts, they take experts into their counsel, and pay no attention to advice from those who are not experts; whereas, when they discuss virtue and vice, good and evil, everybody is supposed to have a right to speak: for on this subject, though one man may know a little more than another, there are no professional teachers who are essentially distinguished from the rest of mankind, but all the citizens are teachers of all.

Protagoras then proceeds to give a sketch of the forms taken by this popular education in morals as it was actually in use in Greece. "Education and admonition commence in the first years of life and last to the very end of it. Mother and nurse, father and tutor, are vying with each other about the improvement of the child as soon as ever he is able to understand what is said to him: he cannot say or do anything without their setting forth to him that 'this act is just' and 'that is unjust'; 'this is holy' and 'that is unholy'; 'do this' and 'abstain from that.' And if he obeys, well and good; if not, he is straightened by threats and blows like a piece of bent

[1] *Protag.*, 322 D.

or warped wood. At a later stage they send him to teachers, and enjoin them to see to his manners even more than to his reading and music; and the teachers do as they are desired. And when the boy has learned his letters, and is beginning to understand what is written, as before he understood what was spoken, they put into his hands the works of great poets, which he reads sitting on a bench at school; in these are contained many admonitions and many profitable tales, and encomiums of ancient famous men, which he is required to learn by heart, in order that he may imitate or emulate them, and desire to become like them. Then again the teachers of the lyre take similar care that the young disciple is temperate and gets into no mischief; and when they have taught him the use of the lyre, they introduce him to the works of other excellent poets who have written lyrics; and these they set to music, and make their harmonies and rhythms quite familiar to the children's souls, in order that they may learn to be gentle and harmonious and rhythmical, and so fitted for speech and action; for the life of man in every part has need of harmony and rhythm. Then they send them to the masters of gymnastic, in order that their bodies may better minister to the virtuous mind, and that they may not be compelled through bodily weakness to play the coward in war or on any other occasion. . . . When they have done with masters, the State

again compels them to learn the laws, and live after the pattern which they furnish, and not after their own fancies: and, just as, when the pupil is learning to write, the writing-master first draws lines with a style for the guidance of the young beginner, and gives him the tablet and makes him follow the lines, so the city draws the laws which were the invention of good lawgivers living in the olden times; these are given to the young man to guide him in his conduct, whether he is commanding or obeying; and he who transgresses them is to be corrected, or, in other words, called to account."[1]

Now it is, I think, obvious that we have here two views of education which are sharply contrasted. On the one side, we have the uncompromising development of the Socratic doctrine that 'virtue is knowledge,' with all the contempt of Socrates for ordinary opinion —which he regards as ignorance pretending to be knowledge—a contempt which reminds us of the attitude of Bentham towards those who appealed to moral sentiment in opposition to the results of his utilitarian theory. And what makes the parallel closer is that Socrates is here made to narrow his own doctrine by defining the good as the maximum of pleasure and the minimum of pain, and thus to reduce ethical science to a calculus of pleasures. On the other hand, the

[1] *Protag.*, 325 c. *seq.* The similarity of this sketch of education to that given in the earlier part of the *Republic* is evident.

unsystematic and unscientific idea of morals is stated with equal one-sidedness by the Sophist Protagoras, who identifies morality with a natural sentiment which is developed by the action of many minds upon each other, by the ordinary social training of the family and the school, by the influences of poetic literature, and by the rewards and penalties which the State bestows and inflicts on its members, but not at all by that scientific process of reflexion and definition which Socrates regarded as all-important.

Now if it be asked, which of these views we are to attribute to Plato, we must answer, *Neither and both.* In other words, as is indicated at the end of the dialogue, Plato has set before us two views, each of them one-sided and imperfect, neither of which he could absolutely accept or reject. It was impossible that he should accept the narrow hedonistic view here attributed to Socrates; yet neither could he surrender his confidence in the Socratic method or his conviction of the necessity of raising ethics into the form of science. He was obviously beginning to perceive that in ordinary opinion—in that common consciousness of ethical distinctions which is developed without any special scientific training by the experience of social life—there is a large element of truth, however mingled with error and illusion. The abrupt Socratic division of knowledge and ignorance was no longer tenable for him, nor could he any longer suppose that virtue was

dependent for its primary development upon philosophical discussion. Rather—as was shown by the practice, however it might be excluded by the theory, of Socrates himself—ordinary opinion must be regarded as the first form of that consciousness of the good, which philosophy has to analyse and develop. And if, as is the case, ethical science must be regarded as standing in a negative relation to opinion, as in a sense opposing and even subverting it, yet after all it must derive the means of correcting and transforming opinion from opinion itself. Opinion must furnish at least the starting-point of investigation; and if there were no truth in it, truth in ethics could never be attained at all.

We may take it, then, that Plato in the *Protagoras* is at the parting of the ways. He is emancipating himself from Socrates, or, as he would probably himself have conceived it, he is advancing from a lower to a higher interpretation of Socratic principles, by the interposition of the middle term of opinion between the extremes of ignorance and knowledge which Socrates left in unmediated opposition. And in the *Meno,* a dialogue which on linguistic grounds must be placed in close connexion with the *Protagoras,* we find that Plato has taken this new step. In the beginning of the dialogue he states in the most direct way the difficulty which arises out of the Socratic position. Socrates has proposed to enter upon an enquiry into the

nature of virtue, of which he professes himself ignorant, and is met by Meno with the objection: "How will you enquire into that which you do not already know? What will you put forth as the subject of the enquiry? And, if you find what you want, how will you recognise that this is the thing which you did not know?" "I see what you mean," answers Socrates, "but consider what a troublesome discussion you are raising. You argue that a man cannot enquire either into that which he knows or into that which he does not know: for, if he knows, he has no need to enquire, and, if not, he cannot enquire, for he does not know the very subject about which he has to enquire."[1]

The difficulty here suggested is not a mere Scholastic subtility: it is really one of the most important problems in the theory of knowledge. It is the question of the relation of science to the ordinary consciousness. If science were merely an analysis of ordinary experience, and did not yield anything more than we can find in such experience, it would be useless; for it would not bring us a step farther than we were before. If, on the other hand, it does carry us beyond such experience, must it not be by a kind of leap in the dark? If the premises anticipate the conclusion, what is the use of drawing it? If they do not anticipate the conclusion, how can it legitimately be drawn? Plato was the first to face this difficulty, and the

[1] *Meno*, 80 D.

answer he gives to it, or at least his first answer, takes the form of what seems to be a mere myth or poetic fiction; though perhaps we may find that it conveys a serious meaning, a meaning which becomes more distinct in the farther development of his philosophy. In any case the answer is one which deserves our particular attention, as it is the first expression of that ideal theory which is the basis of Plato's philosophical theology.

Poets and other inspired men, we are here told, have declared "that the soul is immortal and at one time has an end which is termed dying, and at another time is born again, but is never destroyed. . . . The soul then, as being immortal, and as having been born again many times, and having seen all things that exist, whether in this world or in the world above, has knowledge of them all: and it is no wonder that she should be able to call to remembrance all that she knows about virtue: for, as all nature is akin and the soul has learned all things, there is no difficulty in eliciting, or as men say, learning, out of a single recollection all the rest, if a man is strenuous and does not faint: for all enquiry and all learning is recollection."[1] On this view, then, the soul from the beginning has all truth in itself, but has it in a dim implicit way, as we might be said to know something which we have forgotten but of which the recollection may be

[1] *Meno*, 81 B.

again awakened in us. This view Socrates seeks to illustrate by the aid of a young slave whom he questions, and gradually, by mere questioning, leads to the discovery of the solution of a geometrical problem. In the first instance, the boy gives a wrong answer, but he is made by further questioning to correct himself and to attain to a true view of the subject: and Socrates then draws what seems to be the necessary inference. "What do you say of this, Meno, were not these answers given out of his own head?" "Yes, they were all his own." "And yet, as we were now saying, he did not know?" "Yes." "But still he had in him these notions of his, had he not? Then he who does not know, may still have true notions of that which he does not know." "Yes." "And at present these notions have just been stirred up in him as a dream, but if he were frequently asked the same questions in different forms, he would know as well as any one of us at last."[1] His knowledge, therefore, Socrates argues, is recollection, and if he did not acquire it before in this life, he must have acquired it in another life, or else he must have had it always. The possibility of learning is thus traced back to the fact that knowledge, all knowledge, is in the soul in a potential way, as a memory of some previous state of existence, which is not at first consciously present to us but may be recalled.

[1] *Meno*, 85 B. *seq.*

Analogy is usually the first form in which new truth presents itself, and it was so above all with Plato, in whom the poet generally spoke before the philosopher. Yet there is always a danger that one who has grasped such an analogy, may treat it not merely as a guide to the truth—to the identity that underlies the likeness—but as itself constituting the whole truth to which it points: and it may be that this was the case with Plato. But we should not at once assume that it was so, still less should we assume that it remained so with him to the end. The metaphor of 'Reminiscence' is a convenient way of bringing before us the idea that the acquisition of knowledge is not a process of putting something into the mind *ab extra*, but the evolution of something involved in its own nature. The same metaphor is implied in many common ways of speaking. When we say that we 'recognise' the truth of an observation, it is not that we have known it before, but only that we had already before us the data from which it might be drawn. When we say "You are forgetting yourself," we do not mean that you have forgotten the individual being that you are, but that there is a rational principle, which is one with your very self, and which you are failing to realise. Self-recollection in this sense does not mean going backward upon the past but inward upon a deeper

nature, which perhaps we have never been fully conscious of before. The same idea is illustrated by the claim which Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates, that in interrogating he is practising his mother's art of midwifery upon the souls of those whom he subjects to his questions.[1] Obviously the metaphor of reminiscence cannot be applied literally to the process whereby the mind rises from the particular to the universal: for, in so doing, it is not calling up the image of some object or event known in the past, but discovering the principle that underlies all similar objects and events. Nor could Plato possibly have thought that, in any world, universals could be the objects of sense-perception, like particular phenomena. Hence we should be disposed to say that he was merely using this image as a first expression of the truth which Aristotle puts more definitely when he says that mind is potentially all that it can know. And this, indeed, seems to be the meaning of the alternative to which Plato himself pointed when, in the passage already quoted, he suggested that perhaps the mind always had possession of these principles. While,

[1] This metaphor is commonly attributed to Socrates, but it appears for the first time in the *Theaetetus*, which is a comparatively late dialogue, and it indicates an advance beyond the Platonic idea of Reminiscence. It probably rather represents Plato's own reflexion on the method of Socrates.

therefore, it may not be correct to say that to Plato the idea of reminiscence was merely a metaphor, it is at least obvious that it is not the only or the final form in which he presents his doctrine to us.

This becomes still more obvious when we consider another conception which Plato introduces in the passage quoted above: "As all nature is akin, and the soul has learned all things, there is no difficulty in thus eliciting, or as men say, learning, out of a single recollection all the rest, if one is strenuous and does not faint." The idea here expressed is that reality is not a collection of things, each of which might be known fully without the others, but a connected system in which each part implies the whole. Thus if we know anything, there is in what we know a link of connexion with everything else; and if we follow it out, we shall gradually be brought into possession of the whole. What we know already contains a partial revelation of the general principle manifested in all that exists. Thus it is as in an organism, where the life of the whole works in every member and organ, and there is no possibility of appreciating the significance and value of any part without grasping in some measure the meaning of all the rest. Hence learning cannot be a mere successive process of adding on unconnected perceptions or

experiences to each other; it must be a process of evolution, whereby a universal truth—which is at first confused with a particular case of its application—becomes separated from all particulars, and at the same time is recognised as the principle that determines their nature and their relations to each other.

Now, this conception of reality, as an objective system which is implied in the nature of the mind that apprehends it—so that the growth of knowledge of the world is at the same time the evolution of self-consciousness—enables us to understand the view of opinion which Plato takes, and by means of which he seeks to solve the difficulty of the *Meno*. Opinion is not to him, as it was to Socrates, another word for ignorance: it is a state of mind between knowledge and ignorance, in which we make judgments in particular cases, but are not able to give any reason for these judgments. We say, 'this is just,' and 'that is unjust,' without knowing what justice is. Right opinion may, indeed, in many cases serve the purpose of knowledge. But it has two great drawbacks. In the first place it is unstable. It is "like the images of Daedalus," which are beautiful works of art but "are apt to run away, unless they are fastened by some tie." So right opinions are good but insecure, "unless they are fixed down

by a consideration of the cause"[1] *i.e.* of the reason or principle from which they flow. And, in the second place, as those who possess a faculty of making right judgments without any consciousness of the grounds on which they rest are incapable of explaining or vindicating them, they are unable to communicate their faculty to others. It is in them as a kind of inspiration or intuitive insight, which makes them act rightly without knowing what they do. Therefore "not by any wisdom nor because they were wise, did Themistocles, Pericles and other great statesmen succeed in guiding their states aright, but by a kind of divination; for diviners and prophets say many things truly, but they know not what they say." And so it is also with the poets, and in a sense with all good men, who therefore are often called divine. If, however, we could find anyone of these who should add to his intuitive perception of the right a consciousness of the reason of its rightness, his moral judgments would have a far higher value, and he would be among other living men what Tiresias was among the dead; for, in the words of Homer "he alone had the breath of life and intelligence in him, while all the rest were but flitting shades."[2]

But important as this division between knowledge and opinion seems to be, we must not forget that,

[1] *Meno*, 98 A. [2] *Id.*, 100 A.

for Plato, it is these very opinions which supply the means whereby we attain to knowledge. It is out of the unexplained judgments of the ordinary moral consciousness that we have to elicit the principles or reasons on which scientific morals must rest. We have to ascend from the particulars as given in opinion to the universal principle, by aid of which our views of these very particulars may be corrected. But how is this process to be carried out? The *Protagoras* had suggested what seemed a very simple way of performing it. It had pointed out that there is one common element or circumstance accompanying, and forming a part in all the ends of our action, namely, that they secure pleasure or avert pain by their attainment; and it had gone on to maintain that this common element in all our ends must be taken as *the* end, the *summum bonum*, in reference to which they must all be estimated or valued. Hence, what is needed to correct ordinary opinion and to give a scientific basis to our particular judgments in morals, is simply a measuring art, which shall fix the value of all our actions by the amount of pleasure they produce. But while this was one way of achieving the Socratic aim of making morals scientific, another and a better way seemed to be suggested in the *Meno*. The great object of Socrates had been to define the moral universals, the words of approval or disapproval which are used in the

ordinary moral judgments of men; and his method of achieving it had consisted simply in bringing such judgments together, comparing them, showing their agreements and differences, and using one of them as a negative instance to correct the hasty hypothesis suggested by another; for in this way he hoped to find a principle which would explain them all, showing the amount of truth contained in each, and accounting for the error that was mingled with it. Thus, just as Newton from the many apparent motions of terrestrial and celestial bodies was enabled to elicit the principle of gravitation, which explained all the appearances, and showed in each case what the real motions were; so Socrates, according to this view, sought by a synthesis of the varying judgments of men in particular moral difficulties, to discover a fundamental principle of morality which should justify these very judgments so far as they were right, and correct them so far as they were wrong. In so doing, in short, he was simply following the path which inductive science always has to follow when it seeks to penetrate beyond phenomena to the real laws and nature of things.

Now, the *Meno* had suggested a new explanation of this process and its result. It had suggested that the mind is possessed of a universal faculty, or, in other words, that it is guided in its

apprehension of particular phenomena by universal principles, of which, however, it is not at first conscious, and which it can only imperfectly apply. Science, or knowledge in the stricter sense of the word, must, therefore, mean primarily the bringing of these principles to clear self-consciousness. Thus the true import of the doctrine that 'virtue is knowledge' must be, not that a calculative art of life is to be substituted for the haphazard judgments of ignorance, but that the truth which underlies the judgments of the ordinary moral consciousness, even when these judgments are erroneous, should be discovered; that the reality, which is partly hid and partly revealed by the first appearances of things, should be brought to light by a comprehensive induction and a dialectical discussion of these very appearances. For the error of opinion, or, in other words, of the ordinary consciousness, lies in this, not that it altogether fails to apprehend truth or reality, but that it does not bring its different views of things into connexion, or correct one of them by another; or, in other words, that it does not seek for the unity that underlies all the differences and contradictions of the appearances. Opinion is always, so to speak, at some point of the circumference and never at the centre, and therefore it can never see things in their real value and relations. And truth is to be found only by concentration, by 'thinking

things together'; *i.e.* it is to be found only in some principle which explains all the diversities of experience in consistency with each other.

The *Gorgias* is the dialogue in which the reconstitution of ethics upon the new basis begins. In it Plato insists, not, as in the purely Socratic dialogues, upon the opposition of ignorance and knowledge, but upon the opposition, and at the same time the relation, of opinion and knowledge, or, in other words, of the apparent and the real in morals. Polus, one of the antagonists of Socrates, speaks of the tyrant in a despotic State and of the skilful rhetorician in a free State as the persons who alone have it in their power to attain the highest happiness; for, more than any other men, they can do what they please, can force all other men to bend to their will, and can exile or ruin all who oppose them. And Socrates is made to answer with the apparent paradox that such men can indeed do 'what seems to them best,' but that they, least of all men, can do 'what they will.'[1] For what men really will is not the means but the end, not the particular acts they do or the particular objects they strive after, but the good which they seek to secure through these acts and objects. The immediate objects of human desire—health, wealth, honour, etc. —are, after all, only means to happiness, and not

[1] *Gorgias*, 466 E, *οὐδὲν γὰρ ποιεῖν ὧν βούλονται, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν· ποιεῖν μέντοι ὅ τι ἂν αὐτοῖς δόξῃ βέλτιστον εἶναι.*

happiness itself; they are sought not for themselves but *sub ratione boni*, with a view to the supreme good of life. Thus what we really want is not to satisfy our desires but to satisfy *ourselves*, and we can satisfy ourselves only by the *Summum Bonum*; but in our shortsightedness the ultimate good we seek is apt to become identified with the objects of special desires, and we pursue such objects as if they offered a complete satisfaction. And although, when we attain them, we find that we are still unsatisfied, this experience does not prevent us on the next occasion from falling under the same illusion. Hence the mere power to do what we please cannot help us, so long as we do not know what we will, do not know where the real satisfaction of the soul is to be found.

What, then, is this real good which Plato contrasts with the satisfaction of particular desires? One point is clear to begin with, that it cannot be defined by aid of the measuring art of the *Protagoras*. For, according to the view there expressed, the supreme good was simply the sum of particular goods or pleasures. In other words, the Socrates of that dialogue assumed the particular desires and the pleasures to which they point as his starting-point, and regarded the supreme good as simply the greatest possible aggregate of such pleasures. He sought to define the whole by means of the parts, taken severally and then summed up together. But Plato now maintains

that we must begin with the unity of the whole and regard the parts only as elements in it or means to it. We are not to ask whether this object and that other object, each by itself, satisfies a particular desire and therefore gives a particular pleasure, and then add them all together, deducting any pains that follow on such pleasures and avoiding the objects which in the long run cause a preponderance of pain. We are to regard the good of life as one whole, and to estimate the particular objects only as contributing to this. For, as in any organism the whole is not the mere sum of the parts, nor could we describe a man as consisting of a head, *plus* arms, *plus* legs, and so on, but rather the whole is in every part, and each part can be estimated only as contributing to it: so we cannot say that the good of man consists of a number of separate goods—food, drink, wealth, honours, and so on—and that his complete satisfaction consists in the sum of the satisfactions to be got from all these. Rather we must regard the pleasure resulting from the attainment of each of these objects as illusory, in so far as it is not a means to, or an element in, the one complete good which we are always seeking. Nor does it alter the result, if we look at happiness in another way, as a good which has to be realised in time; for we cannot regard life as a sum of particular actions or feelings, each of which has to be estimated separately, but rather we

must regard each moment or period as a stage in the attainment of the one good of existence, the full realisation and satisfaction of the self.

This is not the exact form in which Plato presents his idea to us, but it expresses his essential meaning. Thus he points out the analogy of virtue in the soul to health in the body. To regard it as the good of life to gratify every particular desire to the utmost is, he argues, as if we should suppose it to be the greatest good of the body to have the utmost possible satisfaction of all the appetites of sense without any consideration of health. Hence the politician who seeks merely to aggrandise the State, and to provide the citizens with 'harbours and ships and colonies' and all the luxuries and conveniences of life, without attending to their moral and intellectual education, is like a cook setting up for a doctor, and supplying his patient with every kind of dainty that pleases the palate without heeding the diseased state of the body he may be producing. In the case of the body it is obvious that it would be ruinous thus to look to what is pleasant in particular and to regard the general good as secondary; for when the order and due regulation of the parts is sacrificed, this in the long run brings about the ruin of the parts themselves. And the same is no less true in the case of the soul; for what we really desire

is, as already said, not the particular object but the good which we think to find in it, and the satisfaction derived from the former is transitory and illusory, if it comes into collision with the latter.

Plato, then, concludes the dialogue by putting the contrast between the two points of view in its most vivid and extreme form. Hence Callicles, the final opponent of Socrates, is made to maintain that the supreme bliss is to have as many, as diverse and as violent desires as possible, provided we have the opportunity of satisfying them. "How," he asks, "can a man be happy who is the servant of anything? On the contrary I venture plainly to assert that he who would truly live ought to allow his desires to wax to the uttermost and not to chastise them; but when they have grown to the greatest, he should have the courage and intelligence to minister to them and satisfy all his longings. This I affirm to be natural justice and nobility. To this, however, many cannot attain; and they blame the strong man because they are ashamed of their own weakness, which they desire to conceal; and hence they say that intemperance is base."[1] "That," answers Socrates, "means that we are to be like a cask with holes, into which water is continually being poured and from which it is as continually running out." Hence it is the highest bliss

[1] *Gorgias*, 491 E.

to be filled with a devouring craving which is ever receiving, but never has received, satisfaction. Our pleasure is bound up with the pain of a want that can never be filled; and, as Shakespeare puts it, using the same metaphor,

> "The cloyed will,
> That satiate but unsatisfied desire, that tub
> Both full and running, ravening first the lamb,
> Longs after for the garbage."[1]

As against this Plato puts the picture of the temperate man, the man whose inner life is ordered by one principle and therefore in harmony with itself, who "when his casks are once filled, has no need to feed them any more, and has no farther trouble or care about them." In other words, in him each desire and impulse has a definite limit, within which it is kept by regard to the others and to the whole of which it is a part. But if this is the type of humanity we are to aim at, then the true statesman, the true educator of men, is one who will maintain the balance of the soul, and who, when it is in a diseased state, is ready to mortify and chastise any particular desire till it is again reduced to its proper proportions in relation to the rest. And from this point of view Plato is prepared to support the apparent paradox that it is better to suffer than to do injustice, and that if any one does injustice,

[1] Quoted by Thomson in his edition of the *Gorgias*.

he ought to wish to be punished for it and not to escape, seeing that it is only by punishment he can be cured.

In all this Plato does not yet give us more than a formal description of the good, as an order or organisation of life which is determined by one principle. But what he distinctly maintains is that we must begin with the unity of the whole and not with the difference of the parts, with the universal and not with the particulars, and that the former must determine the latter. And this is a very important point; for it shows that for Plato the universal, or, to use his own word, the idea, is not merely a common element in the particulars, as pleasure is a common element in all the satisfactions of our desires. It has, moreover, a very distinct bearing upon the ordinary representation of Plato's theory of ideas, in which they are taken as just such common elements. In the *Gorgias* at least it is clear that the universal is conceived as the organising principle of a whole which determines the relations of all the parts. Further, this organising idea in ethics is not conceived as something which has to be brought to the parts or particulars from without, but something which is implied in them, or in our conceptions of them, from the beginning. For, as Plato points out here, and as he shows more fully in the *Republic*, the desire of the good

underlies all our particular desires, and it is the good that we really seek in every end we set before us. "This is what every man pursues and makes his end, having a presentiment that there is such an end, and yet hesitating because neither knowing its nature nor having the same sure proof of it that we have of other things."[1] In other words, the good is the presupposition of all particular goods just as the truth is the presupposition of all our ordinary judgments, which, no doubt, are often erroneous, but nevertheless by synthesis and dialectic may be made to yield the knowledge of a principle which will enable us at once to explain and to correct them.

[1] *Rep.*, 505 E.

LECTURE FIFTH.

THE NATURE OF IDEAS AND THEIR SYSTEMATIC UNITY.

In the last lecture I pointed out that Plato goes beyond Socrates in two ways: in the first place, in so far as he puts opinion—which is his name for the ordinary consciousness before it has been changed by any process of reflexion—between ignorance and knowledge. In other words, he maintains that we are never in a state of pure ignorance from which science has to deliver us. If we ever were in such a state, learning would be impossible, for it would have nothing from which it could start. Opinion, however, is inchoate knowledge; it is a knowledge of appearances, which must indeed be partly illusive, but which cannot be absolutely without relation to the truth. It, therefore, affords a starting-point from which investigation may begin, a material from which, by synthesis and dialectic, truth may be extracted.

In the second place, Plato transforms the view of morality which is attributed to Socrates in the *Protagoras.* He rejects the idea that the principle of morals is to be found in the pleasure which accompanies, or forms an element in all attainment of our ends, and that the science of morals is therefore simply a calculus of pleasures. Such a view would involve that the whole good of life was merely the sum of the parts, whereas for Plato the particular goods of life must rather be estimated and determined by the nature of the whole. The fundamental idea of ethics must therefore be conceived as a principle of unity and order, which is implied in all our particular ethical judgments, but fully expressed in none of them, and which, when it is discovered, can be used to correct and complete the judgments from which it is derived.

So far Plato has been dealing mainly with the problem of philosophy as it is conceived by Socrates. He has been seeking to define the universals which underlie our *ethical* judgments and these only. But it was impossible for him to confine his speculations to this sphere. For in every judgment we make, we use universals or general ideas, and in every case the same maxim will apply, namely, that the universal must be taken neither as the sum of the particulars nor as the abstraction of a common element in them, but as a principle of unity

which is implied in them, and which, when discovered and defined, will make them intelligible. Thus it is not only such predicates as 'good,' 'just,' 'temperate,' that require definition, but all the predicates we use even in our simplest judgments, such as 'one,' 'equal,' 'great,' 'beautiful.' In all our immediate judgments we use general ideas such as these, to determine particular objects, without any previous definition of the general ideas themselves. In all equally we assume that we know that of which we are ignorant, and in all equally the Socratic process of investigation is necessary in order to define our universals, and to correct the uncertain and imperfect use of them which must prevail so long as they are undefined.

Nor could Plato be content with the definition of these general terms taken separately. Each of them is the name of a principle of unity within a certain limited sphere, but all special spheres of existence are elements in the one great whole of reality. Hence, just as in the moral life all our definitions of particular virtues had to be carried back to the definition of the good, as the principle of unity in human life, so all definitions of general ideas must be carried back to one principle of unity in the universe. The problem of philosophy is, therefore, to rise from opinion to truth, not only in ethics, but in all spheres of reality; and not only to find special principles of unity in all particular spheres of reality, but to bring

them all together into one system by the discovery of one highest principle.

The dialogues which are most important in relation to this development of the ideal theory are the *Symposium*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Republic*—dialogues which on the whole belong to the same stage of thought, and which were probably not far distant from each other in time of composition. The *Symposium* and the *Phaedo* in particular seem to be counterparts and complements of each other, the former dwelling upon the *positive* relation of the particular and the universal, the latter upon their *negative* relation; the former giving us a view of the education of man in which sense and opinion are treated as stepping-stones on which he may rise to truth, while the latter regards sense and opinion mainly as hindrances to his progress, and insists on the necessity of a complete emancipation from both. Yet it may easily be shown that there is no essential discord between the two views; for Plato has already taught us to recognise the double nature of sensible experience, as the necessary starting-point or datum of science, and yet at the same time as in itself only an imperfect and illusive apprehension of things, which it is the business of science to correct and transform. Thus the object of opinion at once is, and is not. It is a phenomenon or appearance; and as the appearance both discloses

and hides the reality, as it "half reveals and half conceals the soul within," it has an ambiguous character, and may be regarded either as that which prevents us from attaining to knowledge, or as that which is the necessary and only means of attaining to it. It becomes a hindrance, in so far as the appearance is taken for the reality; and in this point of view the great effort of science is to rise above opinion, to tear away the illusive veil which it casts over the truth, and to grasp the permanent unity which is disguised in its changing forms. Hence opinion is sometimes represented as a kind of dream in which shadows are taken for substances.[1] "He who recognises the existence of beautiful objects but not of beauty itself, and is not capable of perceiving it even if it be pointed out to him, does he not seem to live in a perpetual dream rather than in waking reality?"[2] For in no one of the particular objects to which he ascribes beauty is the principle of beauty adequately realised: and so it is with all the other principles of unity. "Of all the many beautiful things there is none which may not appear ugly, of the many just acts none that may not appear unjust, of the many equals none that in another relation may not appear unequal."[3] And the reason is that, while beauty, justice and equality have definite natures, and while each of them is one self-

[1] *Symp.*, 192 D. [2] *Rep.*, 476 C. [3] *Id.*, 479 A.

identical thing, in their particular presentments, where they are confused with one another and with the subjects in which they appear, they take manifold and diverse forms.[1]

When he is dwelling upon this point of view Plato sometimes seems almost, if not altogether, to fall back upon the unmediated opposition of knowledge and ignorance as it was conceived by Socrates. The ideal reality of things is represented as existing in eternal self-identity, as the one beyond the many, or as the permanent substance which is far removed from all the variableness of the phenomena. Thus, especially in some passages of the *Phaedo*, opinion is set in direct antithesis to science, and the negative relation of the latter to the former is insisted upon in language which approximates to the utterances of eastern mysticism. The idea in its pure nature, it is alleged, is not seen until we have purged away all the imperfections and irrelevancies which attach to its particular embodiments; and this means also that the mind that would grasp it must altogether free itself from the dominion of the senses. It will be observed that these two, the objective and the subjective aspects of Plato's idealism, go together and imply each other. The ideal type is a definite form, a pure universal in which there is no variableness of aspect or compounding of different

[1] *Rep.*, 476 A.

elements, but a transparent and unchanging unity. But, as such, it is invisible, and cannot be presented to sense or imagination, but only grasped by the intelligence: and the intelligence which grasps it must itself be of kindred nature to it. Furthermore, even the intelligence can only grasp such a unity when it withdraws into itself from the confusions of sense which distract and disturb its pure activity. For "when in its perception of things it uses the body as its instrument, apprehending through sight or hearing or any other sense, then it is dragged down by the body into the region of things that never maintain their identity; it wanders and is confused, and loses control of itself, and is as it were intoxicated, because it is dealing with things that have no stability in themselves. But when it returns into itself and reflects, it passes into another region, the region of that which is pure and everlasting, immortal and unchangeable; and feeling its kindred thereto, it dwells there under its own control and has rest from its wandering, and is constant and one with itself, as are the objects with which it deals."[1] From this point of view the body is a kind of tomb of the soul from which it can rise only at death, and the whole life of the philosopher has to be conceived as a practice for that final moment in which it shall free itself from this "muddy vesture

[1] *Phaedo*, 79 c.

of decay" that doth so "grossly close it in," and hinder it from the vision of the intelligible world.

It is in such passages as these that we find the strongest support for the common conception of Plato's idealism as a kind of apotheosis of abstractions, an attempt to find the truth of things in the most general and therefore empty predicates which we attach to them. Further, this conception of Plato's meaning is favoured by the circumstance that he has usually been read under the influence of the unsympathetic criticism of Aristotle, or through the interpretations of the Neo-Platonists, who could appreciate only the negative aspect of his philosophy. We have, however, to observe, in the first place, that Plato, even in the passages where he goes farthest in the direction of mysticism, constantly upholds the doctrine that opinion is not ignorance but imperfect knowledge, and that it is only through opinion, which is mediated by sense, that we can rise to a knowledge of the ideal reality of things. We know ideas at first only as predicates of particular objects, though really they are absolute types to which these objects are never adequate, which they recall, but of which they necessarily fall short. Thus when we give the predicate of equality to two material objects, we are attributing to them something to which they may approximate but which they never exactly attain. The pure mathematical relation can never be

adequately realised in sensible experience, though it is constantly suggested by it. And the same is the case with such predicates as 'beautiful,' 'just,' 'holy,' and so on. No particular thing can realise the type, though every one suggests or recalls it; and indeed it could not become an object of our consciousness unless it did so. And "must we not allow that when any one, looking at an object, observes that the thing which he sees aims at being some other thing, but falls short of, and cannot be that other—he who makes the observation must have had a previous knowledge of that to which the other, though similar, was inferior?"[1]

Setting aside the idea of Reminiscence, what Plato here puts before us is that we always know the particular through, and in relation to, a universal, which has a wider import. The universal is, therefore, logically prior to the particular, in the sense that in apprehending the particular we presuppose it; though it is also true that it is not till later that we direct attention to the universal for itself or attempt to define it.

But, in the second place, Plato's view of the particular, as like the universal and therefore capable of recalling it, is closely connected with his conception of art and also with his idealisation of love. Art is for him the great means of presenting the higher under

[1] *Phaed.*, 74 D.

the form of the lower. Its business is to give to the particular object of sense a form in which it will more adequately represent its idea. In other words, art by a kind of 'noble untruth' removes from the object all the imperfections of finitude and makes it serve as a substitute for the idea itself. Art and poetry bring down the idea into the region of ordinary experience, and make it a presence in the sensible world for those who cannot raise their minds above that world to the intelligible reality of which it is but a semblance. And the same may be said of natural beauty. For, as Plato says in the *Phaedrus*, the beautiful is the form in which the ideal comes nearest to the senses, and is presented most vividly to the ordinary consciousness;[1] while the purely ethical and intellectual ideal has at first no form or comeliness that can commend it to the sense or imagination. And his explanation of the passion of love is that it arises just from that confusion or identification of the ideal with the sensible, of the universal with the particular, which beauty seems to authorise. Hence in the *Symposium* Plato gives us the picture of a process of education or elevation of the soul, which begins in the wonder and desire produced by the outward beauty of one finite individual; and which rises by gradual stages from the body to the soul, from one to all beautiful forms, till it finds

[1] *Phaedrus*, 250 c.

at last its perfect satisfaction in the contemplation of the ideal principle of beauty itself.[1]

In this way Plato seems to pass from a negative to a positive view of the relations of the particular to the universal, from the mystic longing to be freed from the bonds of sense to the recognition that the madness of the poet and the lover, who see the ideal in the sensible, has in it something of divine inspiration. But this is not all. Aristotle brings against Plato the charge that he sought the one beyond the many instead of seeking it in the many. But science, as Aristotle himself recognises,[2] must necessarily do both. It must go beyond the phenomena with which it starts in order to explain them. If it seeks a principle of unity in the diversity of the things of experience, it must isolate the particular aspect or sphere of reality it is investigating from all that is irrelevant to it or not immediately connected with it. Thus the geometrician has to free his figures from every characteristic that does not flow from their definition as spatial forms or determinations of abstract space; and the arithmetician has to isolate his numbers from every determination that does not belong to them as discrete units, standing in external relations to each other. The existence of such sciences

[1] *Symp.*, 210 A. *seq.*

[2] Cf. *Anal. Post.*, II. 19. *ἐκ δ' ἐμπειρίας ἢ ἐκ παντὸς ἠρεμήσαντος τοῦ καθόλου ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, τοῦ ἑνὸς παρὰ τὰ πολλά, ὃ ἂν ἐν ἅπασιν ἓν ἐνῇ ἐκείνοις τὸ αὐτό, τέχνης ἀρχὴ καὶ ἐπιστήμης.*

depends on our being able to consider the relations with which they deal apart from every other relation —*i.e.* apart from everything that cannot be explained by the principle of unity that governs the special aspect or sphere of reality in question. And though such abstraction cannot be so fully and definitely attained in other cases, yet it remains true that in every science we have to deal with a special aspect or sphere of reality; and that in order to deal with it successfully, we have to abstract as far as possible from all that is unconnected with its immediate object. In other words, we seek to free each science from irrelevancies, and to make it into a transparent body of truth, each part of which implies the whole. In many cases we may not be able perfectly to realise such a systematic unity, but it is the ideal we have always to strive after. For knowledge can hardly be regarded as worthy of the name of science till it ceases to be a collection of facts, and begins to take the form of an organic whole, all the elements of which are determined by the same principle of unity.

Now, if Plato's 'one beyond the many' meant this—and we shall find reason to maintain that it did so—it is not liable to the objection that its unity is a mere abstraction. A science must abstract from what is irrelevant to its special point of view, in order that it may work out more fully and definitely what in that point of view is relevant.

It must abstract from all that is not connected with its own specific aim, or included in the specific sphere of existence it has to investigate, in order that it may take as complete a view as possible of all that contributes to that aim, or falls within that sphere. And—subject to a qualification to be explained in the sequel—the Platonic ideas may be fairly interpreted in this sense; for by an idea Plato means something which can be defined, and from the definition of which consequences can be drawn, *i.e.* he means not a bare unit but a unity of differences, not a simple abstraction which excludes all distinction, but a content whose elements, though distinguishable, are yet in transparent unity with each other. When, therefore, he speaks of the exclusion of multiplicity and change from his ideas and from the science of them, what he means to express is that, when we reach the inmost nature of anything we find in it, not parts that are external to each other, or phases that merely succeed each other, but a whole, the elements of which are recognised as essentially connected with each other. In other words, what he is aiming at is not the negation of all difference, but only of differences that do not flow from one principle or are not involved in it. This seems to be the real meaning of Plato, though we have to acknowledge that at this stage of his development he dwells too exclusively upon the

negative aspect of science, upon the permanent unity and simplicity of the idea as opposed to the multiplicity and variableness of the phenomena; and that his language, especially in the *Phaedo*, might encourage the notion that all that is necessary to attain the ideal is to turn away from the world of sense and opinion. His mind, in fact, is occupied almost wholly with the movement upwards to apprehend the principles of unity in things, and hardly at all with the movement downwards to reconstitute the phenomena by a new interpretation. And this over-emphasis, natural as it might be in the first effort to rise from opinion to science, inevitably led to the misunderstanding to which we have referred—a misunderstanding which seems to have arisen at an early period in the Platonic school itself, and which in his later dialogues Plato seeks to correct. Whether he ever completely corrected it so as to exclude the error of mysticism, or whether he was finally driven to admit an irreconcilable division between the world of sense and the world of intelligence, we shall have to consider hereafter.

In the meantime we must go on to deal with a second point, in which theology is vitally interested, namely, that for Plato, even in this earliest form of the ideal theory, all ideas form a whole, and point to one highest idea which includes or absorbs all the others into itself. For in Plato's philosophy, as

already stated, the conceptions of Socrates are in such wise deepened, enlarged, and universalised, that the ideal principle which Socrates sought to introduce into morals is made the basis of a philosophy of the universe. In accordance with this view we find in the *Phaedo* a kind of transfigured rendering of the fact, vouched for by Xenophon, that Socrates at one period of his life had occupied himself with the physical theories of the earlier philosophers, but had finally turned away from them to investigate the ethical principle by which the conduct of man must be regulated. Plato accommodates this fact to his own case, and makes Socrates turn away from the theory of Anaxagoras—who, though he had spoken of reason as the ordering principle of all things, had nevertheless adhered to the methods of explanation which were employed by the other physical philosophers—to the principles and methods of his own idealism. Thus the Platonic Socrates tells us that there was a time when he was content to explain all phenomena by physical causes, treating *e.g.* the growth of animals as the result of some interaction of heat and cold, and even the perception and thought of man as due to the action of the blood or the air on the matter of the brain. But he soon began to find a difficulty in such explanations; for he found it impossible to understand how the unity of life and mind should be produced by

the combination and reciprocal influence of the material parts of the body. He therefore began to doubt what before had seemed a "self-evident truth, that the growth of a man is simply the result of eating and drinking, and that, when by the digestion of food flesh is added to flesh and bone to bone, the lesser bulk becomes larger and the small man great."[1]

Socrates could not see how such a process would explain the facts. Nay, he could not see how such an hypothesis would explain any ideal unity whatever, not even that which is involved in the art of arithmetic. "I could not satisfy myself that when one is added to one, the one to which the addition is made becomes two, simply by reason of the addition."[2] In other words, as Kant afterwards pointed out, there is a synthetic principle involved even in the operations of arithmetic, a principle of connexion which mediates in the addition of one element to another; and we cannot say that the mere bringing of the terms together will explain this process, unless we can find some connective idea by means of which they are reduced to unity. Plato thus, as it appears, opens up the general question of the need of synthetic principles; and that not only for the explanation of life and mind, but wherever, in thought or in things, we discover a real unification

[1] *Phaedo*, 96 D. [2] *Phaedo*, 96 E.

of elements which seem in the first instance to be given as diverse.

Socrates then goes on to tell us that, while troubled with this difficulty, he heard of a book by Anaxagoras which seemed to promise such an explanation of the universe as he wanted, a book in which it was maintained that reason is the disposer and cause of all things. "I was delighted at this notion and I said to myself: 'if mind is the disposer, mind will dispose all things for the best, and put each particular thing in the right place': and I argued that, if anyone discovered the cause of the generation or distribution or existence of anything, he must find out what state of being, doing, or suffering, was best for it: and therefore a man need only consider the best for himself and others, and then he would also know the worst, since the same science comprehended both."[1] In other words, Socrates expected to get from Anaxagoras a teleological system of the universe, which would solve the problem of ethics as a necessary element in its general explanation of reality. But when he read the book, he found that Anaxagoras had assigned for the causes and reasons of things only the particular elements and their actions and reactions upon each other; and that he had not in any way attempted to explain the universe, or indeed

[1] *Phaedo*, 97 c.

anything in it, as a whole, the elements of which were united by one teleological principle.

"I might compare Anaxagoras to a person who began by maintaining that mind is the cause of the actions of Socrates, but who, when he endeavoured to explain the causes of my several actions in detail, went on to show that I sit here because my body is made up of bones and muscles; and the bones, as he would say, are hard and have joints that divide them, and the muscles are elastic and they cover the bones, which also have a covering or environment of flesh and skin which contains them: and as the bones are lifted at their joints by the contraction and relaxation of the muscles, I am able to bend my joints, and this is the reason why I am sitting here in a curved posture:—that is what he would say; and he would have a similar explanation of my talking to you, which he would attribute to sound and ear and hearing, and he would assign ten thousand other causes of the same sort, forgetting to mention the true cause, which is that the Athenians have thought fit to condemn me, and accordingly I have thought it better to remain here and undergo my sentence: for I am inclined to think that these muscles and bones of mine would have gone off long ago to Megara or Boeotia—by the dog they would, if they had been moved only by their own idea of what

is best, and if I had not chosen the better and nobler part, instead of playing truant and running away, to endure any punishment which the State inflicts. There is surely a strange confusion of causes and conditions in all this. It may be said, indeed, that without muscles and bones and the other parts of the body I cannot execute my purposes. But to say that I do this because of them, and that this is the way the mind acts, and not from a choice of the best, is a very careless and idle mode of speaking. I wonder that they cannot distinguish the cause from the condition, which the many, feeling about in the dark, are always mistaking and misnaming." [1]

Socrates expected from Anaxagoras a theory of the universe as an order based not merely upon law but upon design, not upon efficient, but upon final causes. He had expected that Anaxagoras would reduce the order of the universe to a system arranged in view of an absolute good: or, to put it otherwise, that he would explain the world as an intelligible world, the beginning and end of which were to be found in the intelligence. But he soon perceived that in his explanations of particular things Anaxagoras had really followed the same method as his predecessors, the method of physical causes; that in other words, he had dealt only with the particular

[1] *Phaedo*, 98 c. *seq.*

relations of things as they seemed to present themselves to the senses, and had sought only to determine how they acted and reacted upon each other. Now, this method, in Plato's opinion, was doomed to failure: for, as he puts it, when we gaze upon the world with the eyes of sense our minds are confused and dazzled as by the sun in eclipse. Hence it is not in this way that we can hope to rise to the principle of unity in the universe, or even to the principle of unity in any part of it. Being thus disappointed in the high hopes which he had entertained of Anaxagoras, the Platonic Socrates is represented as turning, as a secondary resource, to the theory of ideas and the method of dialectic;[1] that is, he is represented as turning to the Socratic method of induction and definition as it had been recast by Plato himself. That method, he thought, would ultimately bring him in another way to the result which he desired: for it would enable him, in the first place, to attain to the definition of the general predicates by which we characterise particular classes of things, and so to the discovery of the principles which explain particular spheres of reality; and then, in the second place, if doubt were thrown on any one of the principles so established, it would enable him to make a further regress upon some higher universal which he would endea-

[1] See note at the end of this lecture.

vour to define by the same method: and thus he would proceed step by step till he reached a highest principle by which he could explain all the others. An ideal principle reached in this way would not be a mere name—like the ordering mind in the system of Anaxagoras; it would be seen to be the one principle of unity in which all the differences of things found their reconcilement and solution. This conception of a Jacob's ladder of science leading up to the highest idea, which is indicated in the *Phaedo* only by a few pregnant words, is worked out more fully in the *Republic*, where Plato gives his view of the special sciences as preparing the way for the final science of dialectic or philosophy. The sciences —Plato speaks particularly of the mathematical sciences which alone had been developed in his time —are there described as each finding its principle in some one idea which has to be separated from everything irrelevant, and developed to all its consequences. Each of these sciences deals with a whole or sphere of reality which is only a part in the greater whole of the universe, and its principle is therefore a hypothesis which must rest upon something else than itself. Hence to reach an absolute principle we must take a synthetic view of the principles of all the sciences, and seek for the idea which is at the basis of them all; for only one who can see things in their unity is worthy

to be called a dialectician or philosopher. Thus the true method is to go back from particulars to universals, and from these to still higher universals, till we reach the highest universal, the principle that binds them all together and has no principle beyond it—the Idea of Good which is the light of the intelligible, as the sun is the light of the sensible world.

Now, without entering at present upon the discussion of Plato's Idea of Good as it is presented in the *Republic*, let us consider the general contrast of methods which he here sets before us. Plato rejects the view of Anaxagoras because, though reason was his nominal principle, he did not, on the basis of it, work out a conception of the world as an intelligble, or, what is the same thing for Plato, a teleological system—an organic whole, in which the Good which is the essential aim of reason is realised. On the contrary, he fell back upon an explanation of phenomena by the special relations of the parts of the world, as acting and reacting upon each other according to physical laws which might be discovered by observation. Such a method could never, in Plato's opinion, lead to a final explanation of things; nor, however far it was carried, could it verify the assertion of Anaxagoras that the world is the manifestation of intelligence. But Plato thought that his own method of ideas, the method of dialectic and

definition, if it were steadfastly pursued, would ultimately lead to the desired result, would carry the mind up from idea to idea till it reached the Idea of Good, as the most comprehensive of all principles from which all other principles might be deduced, and would thus enable us to conceive the world as a rational system.

Now, this scheme of Plato is apt to be regarded as only an attempt to substitute the barren pursuit of final causes for the fruitful ways of science. And, in a sense, we must admit the truth of the charge. Plato did not understand, and could not anticipate, how much science was to gain by the method he repudiates, the method which begins with isolated facts or elements of reality and aims only at finding out the laws of their action and reaction upon each other. Further, we have to admit that it was impossible for science to advance very far in the way which Plato preferred, by the direct attempt to discover formal or final causes. Not even in the case of the organic world, where final causes have their most natural application, could satisfactory results be reached by such a method. Even there we must begin with the use of lower categories, with the second causes or conditions on which Plato looks so slightingly. We must analyse the whole into its parts, and try to discover the ways in which these severed parts act and react on each other. To

comprehend the living being as a whole or organism is the last, and not the first, thing in science. In this respect Plato's view is like that of Goethe, who objected to the analytic work of science that it 'murders in order to dissect,' and that in the end it leaves us with the parts in our hands, while the spiritual bond, that held them together and made them parts of one living being, has disappeared in the process. Yes, it may be answered, in the end we cannot explain life by the action of the parts of the dead body. But it is not less true that we must begin by dissecting, we must analyse the organism into its parts, else we shall never know much about it. If, indeed, after we have dissected and have the parts in our hands, we think that we have done all that is required, or that we can explain the animal fully by the mechanical and chemical relations of its parts—still more if we think we can explain mind on such a method—then we shall deserve Plato's censure; but, on the other hand, he deserves ours, for his attempt at once to attain the ultimate secret, and for his contempt of the process of analysis which is the necessary presupposition of any conclusive synthesis. Plato does, indeed, introduce a saving clause; for while, in the passage just quoted, he declares that the mechanical conditions of the actions of man or any other being, are not the real causes of these actions,

he admits that they are conditions without which the real causes would not operate. But if this be true, these conditions also require investigation, and it will not do to pass them over, or treat them as something which may be taken for granted. Indeed, it is only after we have mastered the nature of the parts taken in isolation or as externally acting upon each other, that it is safe to go on to recognise that after all they are not isolated, nor is their relation merely external. It is just when analysis has done its work as completely as possible, that we become clearly conscious that no final account of such a being can be given, till we have discovered the one principle that manifests itself in all its differences, and binds them into one organic whole.

So far I have spoken of organic beings in the narrower sense; but Plato maintains that the same thing is true of all forms of existence, and of the universe itself. He maintains, in other words, that we can never get an ultimate explanation of anything by the method of the physical philosophers. For all things, so far as they are independent realities, are in a sense organic, *i.e.* they are systematic wholes, in which we have to explain the difference from the unity and not the unity from the difference, the parts from the whole, not the whole from the parts. Even in mathematics, we cannot explain the unity—say of a geometrical figure—by a synthesis of parts which

are external to each other; we must, on the contrary, first define the unity, and then deduce the correlation of the parts from it. We cannot see *e.g.* what a triangle is, unless we are able to deduce all its distinctive characteristics from its definition. No ultimate explanation of anything can be given, if we accept the principles of Plato, except by the discovery of its formal or final cause.

But admitting all this, we must still maintain that no such reconstruction of the parts from the idea of the whole can be attained without a previous investigation of the parts in their distinction and their external relations. Teleology may not under all circumstances be a barren study, but it must be barren to anyone who is not prepared to go through the patient labour of dissection and analysis. Plato's main defect is that he anticipates the end or ultimate result of philosophy, and that he does not realise the magnitude and slowness of the mining process of science through which it is to be reached. And perhaps we may add that it is just because of his hasty anticipation of the ultimate ideal view of reality which is the goal of science, that his idealism finally remained imperfect, and that both he and his great follower Aristotle were obliged to recognise the existence of something in the world which could not be ideally explained. A philosophy that would be thorough in its idealism, must stoop from the intuition of

the whole to the detailed investigation of the parts; it must wait for the complete realisation of its ideal principles till science has reduced the scattered phenomena into a system of necessarily, though it may be externally, related elements. The revolt of science against a premature teleology was a necessary step in the very history of the process by which in modern times philosophy has been advancing to a more complete teleological view of the universe.

NOTE ON PLATO'S RELATION TO ANAXAGORAS.

The point of Plato's argument in this part of the dialogue has, I think, been often misapprehended. The Platonic Socrates tells us that he went to the book of Anaxagoras with great expectations, because he had heard that Anaxagoras maintained that reason is the principle of all things. He found, however, on reading that book that Anaxagoras had in the main followed the method of the physical philosophers, and that in his explanations of phenomena he started with the particular elements or existences given in sense, and only sought to discover how they acted and reacted on each other. In short, Anaxagoras had at once, as by an immediate intuition, assumed a highest principle of the universe, but had then been unable to make any scientific use of that principle. Socrates, therefore, renounced such ambitious ways of philosophising, and fell back, as a δεύτερος πλοῦς, on his own humbler ways of speculation; as one whose eyes had been blinded by gazing directly at the sun during an eclipse, might turn to look at its image in water, or some similar medium. "This," says Socrates, "was what was in my mind: I was afraid lest my soul might be blinded altogether, if I continued to look at things with my eyes, or tried to apprehend them by help of my senses. I thought, therefore, that I ought to take refuge

εἰς τοὺς λόγους (*i.e.* in his own method of explaining things by ideal principles), and contemplate the truth of things in them."[1] "Yet, perhaps," he goes on, "my metaphor is not very exact, for I do not admit that he who contemplates things ἐν τοῖς λόγοις is looking at mere images, any more than he who looks at them ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις," *i.e.* who observes particulars and their relations as they are given in sense, without rising above them to the universal.

The meaning of this will become evident if we remember that Plato is giving a new version of the fact stated by Xenophon, namely, that Socrates turned away from the speculations of earlier philosophy, which had been based upon observation of the outward world, to practise his own method of seeking for the definition of universals in the sphere of ethics.[2] Plato here makes two changes in the story in order to fit it to his own case. In the first place, he ignores the limitation of the Socratic philosophy to ethics; and, in the second place, he conceives universals in the light of his own ideal theory, *i.e.* as principles at once of knowledge and of reality. Making these changes, Plato contrasts his own method of referring things to universal principles by aid of the intelligence, with that of Anaxagoras, who sought at a single stroke to reach the highest principle, and yet, after all, looked at the world only with the eyes of sense, which could apprehend nothing but particular things and their relations. It is a touch of Plato's humour that he speaks of his own method, which rises gradually from the definition of lower to the definition of higher universals, as a δεύτερος πλοῦς; and, again, that he describes himself as dazzled, as by the "sun in eclipse," when he looks at things with the eyes of sense, and as, therefore, turning for relief to the reflexion of things in thought. He has used nearly the same language in a passage a little earlier in the dialogue (79 B), where he declares that one who tries to apprehend reality by means of the senses "is disturbed and distracted and staggers like a drunken man," and contrasts with this the pure and

[1] *Phaedo*, 99 E. [2] *Mem.*, I. 1, 11 *seq.*

tranquil action of the intelligence, when it contemplates the eternal ideas of things. Plato, we may be satisfied, would never have spoken in earnest of his own dialectic as an inferior method, though it was less ambitious than that of a philosopher who at once asserted the absolute supremacy of reason without working up to this highest universal through any subordinate principles of unity. And, indeed, Plato takes care to guard against such a mistake, when he declares that the metaphor of reflexion does not hold good, and that we do not see reality less directly ἐν τοῖς λόγοις than ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις, *i.e.* through intelligence than through sense. In fact, he believes the reverse of this; he believes that we apprehend the reality of things only as we rise above the particular phenomena of sense and their immediate relations to each other, to the universals or ideal principles of unity, which can only be apprehended by the intelligence. The meaning of the whole passage, then, is that in Plato's opinion we can by the perceptions of sense reach, at the most, only the physical causes or conditions of things, and that the final or formal causes, which alone he thinks worthy of the name of causes at all, can be grasped only by the intelligence. It will be observed that Plato does not here dispute the theory that we can apprehend particular things and their relations by sense alone, and therefore does not distinguish between sensation and opinion. A different doctrine would result from the discussions of the *Theaetetus*, but these seem to belong to a later stage of the Platonic philosophy.

"Endeavouring to show the kind of cause I deal with," the Platonic Socrates goes on, "I fall back upon those ideal principles about which there has been so much talk, and I make *them* my starting-point. In other words, I assume that there is a beautiful in itself, a good in itself, and so on. And if you grant me this, I find in it a sufficient basis for my argument." Plato thus assumes that the ultimate cause or reason for any characteristic of a particular thing, is to be found in some universal or idea, and that "if there be anything beautiful but the beautiful itself, it must be for no other reason than that it partakes in the beautiful." . . . "I know and can understand nothing

of these other wise causes that are alleged, and if any one says to me that the bloom of colour in an object, or its shape, or any such quality of it is the source of its beauty, I leave all that, and singly and simply and perhaps foolishly I hold to the conviction that nothing makes a thing beautiful, but the presence, or participation, or communication—whichever you like to call it—of the beautiful itself. For I am not prepared to speak definitely of the nature of the relation between the beautiful itself and the particular things we call beautiful, but only to assert that it is from the beautiful itself that all particular things derive their beauty."[1]

The ideas, then, are to be taken as constitutive principles of reality within particular spheres of being, and their definition is the only key to the distinctive characteristics of those spheres. "Laying down, then, the principle," *i.e.* the definition of a universal, "that seems to me to be surest, what agrees therewith I set down as true, and what does not agree therewith, I set down as untrue.... And if anyone assails[2] the principle (ὑπόθεσις) itself, you will not mind him or answer him, till you have discovered as to all the consequences which followed from it, whether they agree with each other"; in other words, you will try to work out a self-consistent view on the basis of a particular hypothesis, and will not reject it except on the ground that this cannot be done. But Plato does not stop here, he requires that the philosopher shall rise beyond principles that hold good within special spheres of being, to a highest

[1] *Phaedo*, 100 D.

[2] There is an obvious difficulty in getting this meaning out of ἔχοιτο, but whatever the reading ought to be, the meaning seems assured by what is said immediately afterwards about the Eristic who confuses the discussion of a principle, taken by itself, with the discussion of its consequences. The discussion of a principle in itself must mean the enquiry whether it can be treated as an ultimate principle. Thus the principle of a special science is that idea which furnishes a basis for a self-consistent view of that sphere or aspect of reality. The idea of number *e.g.* may furnish a sufficient basis for arithmetic, but we cannot take it as an ἀνυπόθετος ἀρχή: when we examine it for itself, we are forced to carry it back to some more comprehensive idea.

principle of unity. Hence he says: "When you are required to give an explanation of the principle itself, you will go on to set up a higher principle—the best you can discover among those next in the ascending scale—and so on to one that is higher still, till you reach one that is sufficient for itself. And you will take special care not, like the Eristics, to confuse the discussion of the principle itself, with that of the consequences which follow from it: so only you can hope to attain distinct results about that which really is."[1]

This, as I understand it, points to a hierarchical distribution of ideas in which the highest idea is conceived as the ultimate ground of all the others. Thus the ἀνυπόθετος ἀρχή is that to which we work back on the basis of what Aristotle calls the ἴδιαι ἀρχαί, the latter being regarded as hypothetical in the sense that they find their ultimate ground or principle of explanation in the former. This, however, is not worked out in the *Phaedo*, where Plato does not yet show that by his own method, he is able to reach the Idea of Good as the principle of all knowing and being. Here Plato confines himself to the lower ideas, insisting specially on the point that we must proceed by setting up definitions of special universals, and working out the consequences of such definitions, to see how they cohere with each other. The truth, so far, is to be tested by the coherence or self-consistency of the view which our definition enables us to take of the special sphere, or, as we should rather say, the special aspect of reality included under a universal. In the last resort, however, we must recognise that such universals are not ultimate, and that every subordinate principle must be referred back to some higher principle, and that again to one that is still higher, till we reach that which is *adequate*, or, as we should rather say, self-sufficient.

[1] *Phaedo*, 101 D *seq*.

LECTURE SIXTH.

THE STATE AND THE IDEA OF GOOD.

We have now reached the point at which Plato's philosophy passes into theology, in so far as all the ideas are made to centre and culminate in one absolute ideal principle. This result is specially associated with the *Republic*, that treatise of Plato's manhood in which he sums up all the conclusions he had then attained on morals and politics, on metaphysics and religion, and endeavours to weld them into a connected whole. It is impossible within any moderate compass to give a complete estimate of this great book, but for our purpose it is only necessary to refer to one or two leading features of it. Perhaps it might best be described as a treatise on Education, regarded as the one great business of life from the beginning to the end of it. But it lays emphasis on one aspect of this education which had been quite secondary with Socrates, and was altogether neglected by the Minor

Socratics, namely, that it is the education of a social being, and therefore must be realised, in the first instance at least, through society. Plato, therefore, tries to imagine a perfect community after the highest type he knew, that of the Greek City-State. As an organised society the State, in his view, is founded neither on the force of the strong man, nor on the conspiracy of the weak; it is not the creation of arbitrary choice, even in the form of a social contract between its individual members; it originates not in the will of men at all, but in their nature, as beings who are essentially parts of a whole, each in himself fragmentary and incomplete, but finding his necessary complement in the rest. For such beings, to be isolated is to be weak and undeveloped, to be united is to be strong and have their individual capacities drawn out in the service of each other. For such beings, therefore, the ideal of individualism, the ideal of self-seeking and self-aggrandisement, is suicidal and contradictory. It is only as they give themselves up to the general good that individuals can possibly attain their own, and to seek happiness merely for themselves is the way to lose it. They must die to themselves that they may live in the general life. In short, it is only in the discharge of their social duty that they can be in harmony with themselves; and any attempt to make the general life of the community subservient to

their own, must lead to inner discord, disorganisation and misery. Thus the ideal which Plato sets before us is that of a perfectly unified society, in which each individual, confining himself strictly to his own function, shall in that function be a pure organ and expression of the general will.

Plato has thus risen to the organic idea of the State, as a union of men which is based upon the division of labour according to capacity, and in which the citizen is united to the whole by the special office he discharges. But in working out this idea in the form of the Greek City-State, he lands himself in two great inconsistencies. On the one hand, sharing, as he does, in the Greek view that the higher life is only for the few—for those who are capable of intellectual culture, and in proportion as they are capable of it—he is unable to conceive the lower classes, those engaged in agricultural or industrial labour, as organic members of the State; he is obliged to regard them as the instruments of a society in whose higher advantages they have no share. And, on the other hand, he is so solicitous to exclude all self-seeking, and directly to merge private in social good, that he deprives even the favoured citizens of personal rights, and destroys the family lest it should become the rival of the State. He thus seems to secure the unity of the State, not by subordinating the personal and

private interests of its members, but rather by preventing any consciousness of such interests from arising; and the result is that he reduces it to a mechanical, instead of raising it to a spiritual or organic unity. In the reaction against the individualistic tendencies represented by the Sophists, he finds no way to maintain order except by the absolute suppression of individual freedom.

At the same time, this is not the whole truth, and it could not be the whole truth for one taught in the school of Socrates. Plato, indeed, made a great change in the views of his master, when he recognised that virtue cannot rest primarily upon scientific knowledge, but only upon what he calls right opinion, that is to say, upon a moral sentiment which is in great part the result of social training. The virtue of the mass of men at all times, and of all men in the earlier part of their lives, must be the product, not of philosophic reflexion, but of the unconscious influences under which they grow up as members in a society, and of a teaching which has no scientific character. Yet Plato could not but hold that in its highest sense 'virtue is knowledge,' *i.e.* that it must rest upon conscious principle; and that any other kind of virtue—any virtue that is based upon rules whose principle is not present to him who obeys them—is inchoate and imperfect. If not for the mass

of men, yet for the chosen few, there must be a complete liberation from the life of mere use and wont. Nor, indeed, can the life of use and wont produce its highest results, unless it is regulated by the providence of governors who have risen above it, and have attained to philosophic insight into the meaning and object of man's existence. The affairs of men will never be perfectly ordered "unless philosophers be kings or kings philosophers." What is wanted for the perfecting of the moral life is not, therefore, as Socrates taught, that all individuals should be able to guide themselves by a clear reflective consciousness of the end of all human action and of the means whereby it may be attained; it is only that there should be a few individuals in the State—even one might be enough—who have such a consciousness, and who are thereby fitted to become shepherds of men, and to guide and mould the lives of all the others. These wise governors, like Carlyle's 'hero-kings,' will have the duty of selecting for each of the citizens the office which he individually is suited to discharge, and giving to him the mental and bodily training which he requires to discharge it aright. They will have to keep away from the lives of the citizens everything that is discordant and inharmonious, and to surround them with what is becoming and beautiful, so that healthful and inspiring influences may reach them from every quarter. They

will take the religion of the people under their care, and will provide that the poetry and mythology—the stories of gods and heroes through which truth is first presented to the immature minds of the young—shall be such as to suggest ideas of purity and goodness; and they will banish from the State all profane and licentious tales such as pollute the pages of even the greatest of the Greek poets. For in the ideal city the philosophic legislator cannot permit the poet to follow his own sweet will, but must stand by his side and exercise a censorship over his works, so that nothing unseemly or unlawful may reach the ears of the citizens.

Thus the demand of Socrates, that morality should be based on a clear reflective consciousness of the end of action, is not renounced, but it is limited to the few who stand at the head of the State. And no question is raised as to the general doctrine, that the life of society as a whole is to be guided by scientific knowledge; though it is admitted that in a private station men may do with something less. In modern times even this modified form of the Socratic doctrine would be challenged. What we now expect from ethical theory is that it should analyse and explain the moral consciousness of the past and the present, but not—except to a very limited extent—that it should furnish a guide for the future. We recognise that morality is progressive, and that in this progress.

the clear reflective consciousness of any form of life is rather the last product of its development than the beginning from which it starts. It is not given to nations any more than to individuals to scheme out the plan of their lives beforehand. What exists at first is at most some intuitive perception which grows clearer as it is brought into action, but which can be fully understood only when it is completely realised. And the attainment of definite knowledge—such knowledge *e.g.* as Plato and Aristotle had of the ethical basis of the Greek State—was an indication that the work of that kind of State was all but ended, and that men were advancing to other forms of social and political life.

But neither Plato nor Aristotle could look at the matter in this light. They were without the general idea of progress, and to them the Greek City-State was the *πέρας τῆς αὐταρκείας*, the absolute form of man's ethical life, beyond which nothing could be achieved. What seemed to them possible was only that the lessons drawn from the past experience of Greek politics might be used to perfect the type, and produce a city in which all the good points of Greek cities (especially of Athens and Sparta) might be united, and all their mistakes avoided. Plato perhaps faintly perceived that this ideal State—this Sparta without its rudeness, this Athens without its indiscipline—was a *πολιτεία ἐν*

οὐρανῷ, a pattern laid up in heaven and in the soul of the philosopher. But neither he nor Aristotle discerned that they were pouring new wine into old bottles, and that, by the very fact that they were able to theorise Greek political life so perfectly, they were carried beyond it. They were putting more into the framework of the City-State than it could bear, and clothing a forecast of the future in the forms of the past.

One of the points in which Plato's overestimate of the practical power of theory, and his defective comprehension of its real place in development, are shown most clearly, is in his scheme for remoulding Greek mythology and purifying it of all the elements which seemed to him to be immoral or irreligious. He sees no anachronism in placing the philosopher, who has meditated on all the problems of speculative theology, side by side with the poet, who gives imaginative form to the mythology of a nation, and sings the fresh songs that express its inchoate religious ideas. He fails to discern that the creation of a mythology could not be the work of an age of reflexion; and that, even if *per impossibile* the poets could produce such a mythology, neither they nor any State authority could ever make it an object of belief. The conditions which call forth such deep and far-reaching speculations as those of Plato and Aristotle are altogether inconsistent with the creative

spontaneity which gave rise to the legendary tales of gods and heroes, and equally inconsistent with the simple uncritical faith that accepted them as truth. It was natural, indeed, that a philosopher, who saw how much had been done by poetry to excite and educate the mind of Greece in the era when conscious reflexion was at its minimum, should express a pious wish that this great service could have been performed in a less ambiguous way, without the intermingling of so many weakening, and even immoral, elements: but to suppose that in any circumstances the miracle of the first great spontaneous outburst of Greek poetic production could be repeated, and repeated under the guidance of a fully developed philosophical criticism, was an obvious anachronism. A mythology cannot be produced of *malice prepense*, or by those who do not believe in the gods whose actions they describe. The law of development will not permit us to have the flower along with the fruit, for the simple reason that the decay of the flower is the condition of the appearance of the fruit. And just because philosophy is the further product of a consciousness which has already expressed itself in a mythology, it is impossible that the two should flourish together; still more that the former should preside over the genesis of the latter. There is, no doubt, a kind of poetry that belongs to an age of reflexion; but it cannot be

like the simple spontaneous song of an earlier time, nor can it create the kind of myths in which the popular imagination finds the first satisfaction of its spiritual needs.

Plato's discussion of the poetic mythology of Greece is one-sided and inadequate. He seems to condemn it in a body as immoral and misleading; and he makes no distinction between the crude and almost savage stories which we find preserved in Hesiod, and the bright picture of humanised divinities which is set before us in Homer; nor does he recognise the great advance both in an intellectual and in a moral aspect which is involved in the latter. He sees only that in both cases the gods are represented as doing deeds which, by the developed conscience of his own time, would be accounted discreditable; and he demands that divine beings should always be represented as perfectly good and also perfectly unchangeable—not noticing that at least the latter of these two demands is inconsistent with the very existence of mythology. On the other hand, he regards it as the business of art and poetry to present the truths of ethics and religion in a form suitable to minds that are yet unripe and unfitted for the reflective processes of science. In particular, he thinks that it is the office of mythology to inculcate a simple faith in the omnipotence of goodness upon those who are not

yet prepared to grapple with the problem of evil; and in this poetic teaching he would have all the perplexing difficulties of life evaded, and all inconvenient facts suppressed. "If they can be got to believe us," says Plato, "we shall tell our citizens that quarrelling is unholy, and that never up to this time has there been any quarrelling among citizens."[1] Evil is to be kept out of sight, and, so far as may be, treated as an impossibility. Poetry is to tell its 'noble untruth,' and no scepticism or criticism is to be allowed to breathe a breath of suspicion upon it.

Now, it may be true, as Plato thinks, that faith in God—a faith that good is stronger than evil, and even that it is all-powerful—is the necessary basis of our higher life, and that without some such faith morality is apt to shrink into a hopeless striving after an unattainable ideal, and must, therefore, cease to exercise its highest inspiring power. To hold that what we regard as best and highest is also the ultimate reality—the principle from which all comes and on which all depends—is the great religious spring of moral energy. Even from early times the social union finds its consecration in the idea that it is a union of men based on their common relation to a god, who is the guardian of the destinies of his people. On such a faith Plato

[1] *Rep.*, 378 c.

would found his State. But his difficulty was that the first form of the religious faith of Greece was, in an ethical point of view, so imperfect, and that, such as it was, it was rapidly disappearing before the widening knowledge of men, and the loosening of social bonds that went therewith. The civic State, torn by faction, no longer rested securely on the belief in its protective deities; and even if the State had remained what it was, the sympathies of men had begun to reach beyond it. For this condition of things there seemed to be only two possible remedies: either that the old ideal life of citizenship—with all its wholesome narrowness of view, with all the religious beliefs on which it rested—should be restored, and that thus the thoughts and aims of men should again be confined within the limits of the microcosm of the city; or, if this were impossible, then philosophy must face all the wider problems suggested by the knowledge and experience of the new time, all the difficulties that had arisen out of the hard facts of life, and especially out of the existence and prevalence of evil, and it must find some way of explaining them in consistency with the idea that good is the ultimate reality. Either the course of civilisation must be turned backward, so as to revive the 'good old times' of the fighters of Marathon, as was the dream of Aristophanes; or else —as a pupil of Socrates might rather be expected

to hold—philosophy must take account of the reasons upon which pessimistic views of life may be based, and must find its way to an optimism that has an answer for them all.

Now, Plato—and this is what constitutes the peculiar characteristic of the view which he presents in the *Republic*—does not adopt one of these alternatives to the exclusion of the other, but in a way accepts them both: the former for the benefit of the citizens in general, the latter for the philosophic rulers. For the many, he would restore in a higher form the order of the Greek municipal State, in which the citizen, disciplined in civic virtue and patriotic self-devotion, inspired by a purified mythology, and surrounded by beautiful forms of art—aesthetic types of goodness and purity—should live a life of faith, sheltered from all doubt and intellectual difficulty. And, on the other hand, for the philosophic few who had outgrown the stage of culture in which the mind can be fed with imaginative pictures, he would endeavour to provide a higher kind of education, in which all the secrets of science and philosophy should be revealed. Furthermore, the men thus educated were to take the place of kings or governors of the State, and to find in their contemplation of the intelligible universe the exemplar, after which, so far as possible, they should mould the life of the community over which they ruled.

For, in Plato's view, he who has grasped the supreme principle of truth, which he calls the Idea of Good, is by it carried beyond all the contradictions of ordinary experience, and has become able to regard the confused and shadowy world of appearance from a higher point of view. He has become possessed of a divine pattern, by means of which he can bring order into the transitory life of men in this world.

Plato, then, makes a sharp division between an earlier stage of religious development of his citizens, in which they are to be kept out of sight of moral and religious difficulties, and taught simply that all things are ordered for the best by perfectly good gods, and a later stage of it, in which they are to face all the problems of existence, and to endeavour to solve them by the aid of philosophical reflexion. At the same time, he is deeply conscious of the difficulties of the transition from the first to the second of these stages; or, in other words, of the dangers of that period of doubt and criticism with which philosophical enquiry must begin. In the seventh book of the *Republic*, he illustrates these dangers by the image of a youth who is brought up to reverence certain persons as his parents, and who is protected from temptation by his belief in their rightful authority over him, but who suddenly learns that they have no such natural claim to his obedience,

and is tempted in consequence to disregard all the commands they have laid upon him. In like manner, as Plato would indicate, the young man who is prematurely initiated into the dialectical methods of philosophical criticism, will learn to detect the illusion of his first faith in those mythological divinities whom he has been taught to regard as the authors of the ethical rules under which he has hitherto lived; and he will therefore be in danger of falling into a fatal scepticism, and losing his hold upon all ethical rules whatever. Hence Plato urges that this initiation, even in the case of those who are fitted for it, should be delayed till the character has been thoroughly confirmed in the love of what is good and the hate of what is evil; and that, in the case of the great body of the citizens, it should not take place at all.

Now, as we have already seen, there is a great difficulty in admitting the conception of such a division between two classes of citizens in the same State—a division in which the higher class possesses for itself the esoteric truth of philosophy, while the lower class is fed with mythological fables. There is, indeed, at all times, a certain difference between the ordinary consciousness which is content with half-pictorial modes of thought, and the reflective spirit of science which cannot be satisfied with anything but exact definition and clear logical connexion: but it is impos-

sible to draw any definite line of separation between two classes of human beings, not living in different ages, but at the same time, and as members of the same society. Still more impossible—if there are grades in impossibility—would it be, in an age of reflexion, to push men back into an earlier stage of culture and save them from all the dangers of doubt. In such an age, the sphere of opinion cannot be sharply divided from that of science; nor is it possible by any artificial barriers such as Plato proposes, to secure men from the disturbing power of a dialectic, which detects the 'noble untruths' of poetry. The idea of a class of philosopher-kings who are to keep the keys of knowledge for themselves, and act as a kind of earthly providence to other men, sins, like Carlyle's conception of hero-worship, against the solidarity of humanity. A secret doctrine of philosophy is almost a contradiction in terms: for philosophy cannot live, and refuse to communicate itself to anyone who is capable of receiving its lessons. Something like it we may find in early stages of civilisation, as among the Egyptian priesthood, or in a modified form in the divided society of the middle ages. But such exceptions prove the rule: for in both cases philosophy was enslaved by tradition and smitten with barrenness. It was not the free evolution of thought which alone Plato would have thought worthy of the name.

In the case of the few who are admitted to the higher training in dialectic, Plato thinks that philosophy is able to replace the optimism of faith by a higher optimism, which is not, like the former, attained by a mere evasion of difficulties—by refusing to admit the reality of that which is ignoble or evil, or by taking refuge in the pure heaven of art—but which is to look all such problematical phenomena in the face, and to explain them in consistency with the absolute reality of the good. Now, it is manifest that philosophy can do this only in one of two ways: either by showing that what we call evil may itself from a higher point of view be resolved into a means to good, or into a phase in its development; or, at least, by showing that evil has only a secondary and transitory existence, which is incidental to the realisation of good in this phenomenal world. I here put these two alternatives in contrast; for they point to two paths of idealistic philosophy of which we shall have much to say in the sequel, and which, therefore, it is well to have before us from the first. I say, then, that the difficulties and contradictions that seem to attach to the facts of our earthly existence, and especially the problem of evil, may be met by philosophy in two possible ways. On the one hand, philosophy may admit that there is some resistant element, or negative characteristic, in the phenomenal world, by reason of

which the highest good cannot be realised in that world; but, at the same time, it may maintain that this element becomes secondary and accidental in our eyes, when we turn to the permanent ideal being which gives even to the world of phenomena all the reality to which it can lay claim. Or, on the other hand, in the spirit of a more thoroughgoing idealism, philosophy may maintain that evil exists only in the part when we isolate it from the whole, or only in the particular phases of existence when we separate them from the complete process to which they contribute. Which of these solutions Plato adopted, we must presently consider. In the meantime we have to note that the *religio philosophi*, to which we advance in the second part of the *Republic*, centres in the Idea of Good, as a principle of unity on which 'all thinking things' and 'all objects of all thought' are dependent.

In the contemplation of this idea, the philosopher is carried beyond the State, and the morality of use and wont which is bound up with its existence, to the contemplation of the whole system of the universe, in comparison with which the State is a very little thing. For the philosopher, in Plato's ideal picture of him, is one whose thought, in the first instance at least, is directed away from all that is particular, finite and transitory to that which is universal and eternal. He is a "spectator of all

time and existence," and he cannot be chained down, either in thought or action, to any particular finite object or interest. He has freed himself from the narrow ambitions and desires of his transitory life as a mortal man, and is therefore perfectly generous and fearless: all mean cares and grudges have been taken out of his heart. The vision of absolute reality reconciles him to the universe, and to all things and beings in it, at the same time that it lifts him above the tendency to attribute too great importance to any of them, and above the passionate impulses which are the consequence of such over-estimate of the finite. "Such *σμικρολογία*," such a tendency to ascribe excessive value to the little things of time, says Plato, "must least of all be the characteristic of a soul that seeks to grasp the whole compass of reality human and divine."[1] As it is expressed in the parallel words of Spinoza, "love towards that which is eternal alone feeds the soul with unmingled joy," so that no room is left for disturbance about finite and transitory things.

There is something that looks like a contradiction in the fact that Plato, who has hitherto been carefully building up the system of the State as a social and political ideal to be realised in the immediate life of man, now seems suddenly to soar away from all such practical considerations, and to regard all

[1] *Rep.*, 486 A.

earthly existence as "less than nothing and vanity." And an ingenious, though somewhat one-sided German writer, has even maintained that there is an absolute opposition between the two parts of the *Republic*—an opposition which, indeed, runs through all ideal views of life, and which cannot be in any way solved or bridged over. "Here," he declares, "we find a great rift in Platonism. It was as the moralising follower of Socrates that Plato drew the first sketch of the ideal State, but it is as the metaphysician—who looks beyond the changing appearance to the real being of things—that he completes it. These two tendencies meet in conflict, yet neither can free itself from the other. The reformer, who would heal the disease of his people, must believe in the usefulness of his own art; but the speculative thinker must contemn the fleeting forms of life in view of the substantial reality that underlies them. This rift in Platonism is, however, the rift that rends the life of all noble spirits. They work in the present with their best energy, yet they know that the present is but a fleeting shadow."[1]

[1] Krohn (*Der Platonische Staat*, p. 103), quoted in edition of the *Republic* by Jowett and Campbell, Vol. II. p. 9. Compare the remarkable passage in the *Laws* (803 B), *ἔστι δὴ τοίνυν τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πράγματα μεγάλης μὲν σπουδῆς οὐκ ἄξια, ἀναγκαῖόν γε μὴν σπουδάζειν.* In the context it is said that "man was made to be the puppet or plaything of the gods, and that, truly considered, is the best of

Krohn here seems to suppose that the last word of Plato, and indeed of philosophy, is that there is an absolute division in our spiritual life, and that morals and metaphysics are essentially contradictory. But there is, surely, no essential contradiction in rejecting the claim of the particular objects and interests of our ordinary experience to be real *in themselves* and, as it were, in their own right, and yet asserting their relative reality, when they are regarded as the manifestation of the one principle which is absolutely real. Nor is there any inconsistency in condemning the actual state of the world as at discord with itself and unstable, in so far as it suggests an idea of which it falls short, and, at the same time, thinking of it as a step in the realisation of that idea. It is only in so far as Plato holds, not merely that there is "something in the world amiss" which "will be unriddled by and bye," but that there is something in it essentially unideal and irrational, that we can find in his philosophy such an ultimate contradiction as Krohn alleges. But with this point we are not yet prepared to deal.

him." Bruns (*Plato's Gesetze*) draws attention to the contrast of this with many other passages where the acquisition of virtue is spoken of as the most earnest work of life (*e.g.* 770 D). He argues on this and other grounds that the whole passage (803 A-804 B) is due to Philippus, the editor of the *Laws*. It is possible that there is a shade of pessimism in the passage which is not Platonic, but the general alternation of the two points of view is already found in the *Republic*.

Meanwhile let us consider what it is that Plato finds in his Idea of Good. There are three ways in which he endeavours to answer this question. In the first place, as is indicated by the very name of the Good, it is the chief and final satisfaction for which our souls are always looking, which they anticipate from the first and for the sake of which they desire everything else; yet it is the last thing they come clearly to understand. From this point of view the *Republic* exhibits to us a series of stages in the process of defining it. In the first book, it is represented, as Socrates had represented it, as the goal of the individual life, which each man has to discover for himself by a consideration of his nature as a man and of the work for which it fits him. Then, at the next stage of Plato's argument, man is shown to be essentially social, essentially a member of a State, so that he can find his good, only as he discovers his proper place in the social organism, *i.e.* the place for which his special tendencies and capacities fit him. But even here Plato cannot stop: for the social organism itself has to be regarded *sub specie aeternitatis*; and, so viewed, it is found to be a *microcosm*, a little world in itself, but one which can only attain the perfection of which it is capable, when it is moulded after the similitude of the *macrocosm*. Hence it is the philosopher—who lives in the contemplation of the universe, and apprehends the

principle of order that is manifested in it—and he alone, who can give to the State its true or ideal constitution. He alone can make all things "after the patterns howed him in the Mount." Thus ethics and politics find their ultimate basis in a theology which contemplates the world as a teleological system, and of this system the Idea of Good is the end and principle.

The next step is taken by means of an analogy: which is really more than an analogy, since the object used as an image is declared to be the 'offspring' or product of that which it is taken to illustrate. In other words, the material world, from which the image is drawn, is not for Plato an arbitrary symbol of the ideal reality; it is its manifestation or phenomenal expression; and, therefore, the principle of unity in the one is essentially akin to the principle of unity in the other. Now, what is the principle of unity in the material world? It is, Plato suggests, the sun; for the sun, as the source of the heat which is essential to growth, may be regarded as the cause of the existence of the objects we see; while at the same time, as the source of light, it reveals the forms and colours of those objects, and enables us to see them. In like manner, Plato bids us regard the Idea of Good as at once the cause of existence to all things that exist, and of knowledge to all minds that know

them. It is thus 'beyond existence' and 'above knowledge'; as it is that in which they both originate, and by which they are united to each other as elements in one whole. By the aid of this analogy, therefore, Plato carries us beyond the conception of a principle of unity in the objective world, and suggests to us the thought that, if the Idea of Good is the ultimate cause or reason of the universe, it must be also the principle of unity in the consciousness of man, the principle that constitutes his intelligence and makes knowledge possible to him.

The third and last point in Plato's exposition of the Idea of Good is derived from its relation to the other ideas. In the *Phaedo*, as we saw in the last lecture, he had already spoken of a regressive method that goes back from one idea to another till it reaches a principle which is ultimate and self-sufficient. Here he speaks of a similar method by which the intelligence advances from the special sciences to philosophy. Each of the special sciences is shown to have some organising idea which gives order, self-consistency and systematic connexion to our view of a special sphere of reality, and thus lifts us above the empirical co-existences and sequences of phenomena within that sphere. But, as the world is one world, and all special spheres of reality are parts of one great all-inclusive sphere, it is impossible for the intelligence to be satisfied

with the results of the special sciences. The principles of these sciences are hypothetical, in the sense that they are not ultimate but find their basis in something deeper and more comprehensive than themselves. The true dialectician is 'one who sees things in their unity,' who is unable to rest in any fragmentary and incomplete view of things, but must feel insecure till he has found one all-embracing principle, which enables him to view the universe as a systematic or organic whole. Having found such a principle of principles he will be able to give their proper place to all the investigations of the special sciences.[1] The Idea of Good, then, is the

[1] In spite of all that has been said by Mr. Adam in his edition of the *Republic* (Vol. II. p. 156 *seq.*), I am not convinced that the doctrine attributed by Aristotle to Plato—that the objects of mathematical science constitute a separate kind of existence which stands midway between the ideal and the sensible—is to be found in the *Republic*. It is true that the mathematical sciences are spoken of as objects, not of νοῦς, but of διάνοια, and that they are regarded as constituting the first stage in the ascent of the mind above sensible phenomena. It is true also that they are said to stand in the same relation to the objects of pure intelligence, in which the objects of sense stand to them. Still, the special characteristic by which Aristotle distinguished τὰ μαθηματικά from ideas is not mentioned, and Plato has as yet no hesitation in speaking of ideas of quantity. And he can hardly have considered them disparate from the Idea of Good, since he reaches that Idea by viewing them in their unity, ὁ γὰρ συνοπτικὸς διαλεκτικός (*Rep.*, 537 c). This, I think, supports Jowett's rendering of the words: καίτοι νοητῶν ὄντων μετ' ἀρχῆς: "when a first principle is added to them, they"—*i.e.* the sciences—"are cognisable by νους," as distinguished from διάνοια.

teleological principle of Socrates, as applied not to the individual life but to the universe. It is the final end of all things, not as something external to them, but as immanent in them; it is, therefore, beyond all the differences of the finite, and especially it transcends the distinction of knowing and being, the distinction between the intelligence and the reality which is its object. Lastly, it is the principle on which all other principles rest, and in which all science finds its unity.

If we gather together these different aspects of the Idea of Good, I think we can see what is Plato's true purpose and meaning, and at the same time we can guard against the misconceptions of many of his professed disciples. Thus, taking hold of those expressions in which he separates the Idea of Good from all others, and especially of his declaration that it is 'beyond being' and 'above knowledge,' the Neo-Platonists identified the Good with a unity which we cannot define or express, a unity which we can only experience in an ecstasy wherein all thought and even all consciousness is extinguished. They did not observe that Plato reaches his conception of it, not by abstraction, but by synthesis, not by turning away from all the special principles of knowledge, but by 'thinking them together,' that is, by finding the one principle which

shall determine the place and relations of all the others. Nor did they attach sufficient weight to the passages in which the good is spoken of as a unity which is always presupposed, though never distinctly reflected upon, in our ordinary consciousness of the world. For Plato the Idea of Good is so far from being unintelligible that it is that which constitutes the intelligence.

There is, however, a real difficulty in the question which is not sufficiently met by such general statements. For how is it possible to characterise a principle of unity which is beyond all the differences of the finite, and, in particular, beyond the difference of being and knowing? If we seek to define the unity of the whole in terms of any of its parts, we seem to be committing an obvious paralogism. But it is not less illogical to define it by simply putting the different parts together, as if the infinite were a collection of finites. Hence we seem to be driven to the resource of defining it not positively, but negatively, that is, by denying of it everything that we assert of its parts. But we are brought in this way to the result of the Neo-Platonists, who argue that, because the Good is 'beyond being' and 'above knowledge,' it cannot be characterised by any terms derived from either: which means that it cannot be characterised at all.

This difficulty is a real one, and it has often driven

men into Agnosticism; for it seems as if our minds were forced to make a demand which yet it is impossible for them to satisfy. On the one hand, it is a necessity of thought to regard the world as a self-consistent whole. We cannot conceive the possibility of there being two worlds, which are not parts of the same universe, because to do so would make all our thinking incoherent. In all our intellectual life we go upon the hypothesis that the universe is one; and that everything in it has its definite place in relation to the whole, by ascertaining which we can define it. We go upon this hypothesis, indeed, for the most part without thinking of it at all; but it is the essential business of philosophy to realise it, and to carry back all subordinate principles to it as the ultimate presupposition of the intelligence. Yet the moment we try to define this unity, we are met with the dilemma just mentioned, that either we must give up the attempt to characterise the whole at all, or else we must characterise it in terms of one or all of its parts. All definition seems to rest upon the distinction of one object from another within the whole, and therefore the whole itself and its principle of unity seem to be beyond definition. Or if we define it in terms of one of its parts, we carry up into the whole the limitations of that part. Thus to say that the ultimate reality is matter as opposed to mind, or mind as opposed to matter, seems to involve a denial of the

real existence of the alternative we reject, or to reduce it to an illusion. Is not the Idealist forced to declare, as Berkeley declared, that matter is a mere idea or subjective existence, and the Materialist to maintain that mind is really a quality or phase of matter, which by some illusion we treat as independent? Or, on the other hand, if we say that the Absolute is a *tertium quid*, which is neither mind nor matter, though it is the source of both, how are we to define this *tertium quid*, or avoid reducing it to the Unknowable of Mr. Spencer?

The key to this problem is to observe that the distinction of mind and matter, or of knowing and being, like all other distinctions we make, is a distinction within the intelligible world, a distinction in consciousness, which presupposes a unity beyond the difference. It is not, therefore, a distinction between two terms which stand on the same level, as if we had knowledge on the one side and reality on the other—each given altogether independently of the other—and had then to seek for something to mediate between them. To suppose such a dualism would be to assert the complete separation of two things, which are never presented in our experience except in relation to each other. It would be to deny thought its essential character as consciousness of an object, or reality its essential character as the object of thought. For we do not—as might seem from some psychological

theories—first know ourselves, and then infer the existence of objects from the nature of certain of our thoughts; but it is only in distinguishing ourselves from, and relating ourselves to an objective world that we know the self within us at all. On the other hand, it is equally true—and it was a large part of the work of Kant to prove it—that objective reality is in essential relation to the conscious subject, and that it is impossible ultimately to think away this relation from it. Furthermore, so intimately associated in our experience are object and subject, that it might easily be shown that we cannot enlarge our inner life or deepen our self-consciousness, except by widening our experience and knowledge of the objective world; and that we cannot widen our experience of the world, except by a process that draws out the capacities and enriches the inner life of the self. Hence to ask how we get from the subject to the object, or from the object to the subject, or from their difference to their unity, is to put the question in such a way that it cannot be answered; for, if we could suppose them to be primarily unrelated, it would be impossible to pass from the one to the other, or, even if we had both, to discover their unity.

The problem, however, takes a very different aspect when we realise that in all our conscious life the unity of both terms is the presupposition of their difference,

and that it is simply due to the self-ignorance of the ordinary consciousness—to its want of reflexion upon its own nature and conditions—that it fails to recognise the fact. Thus, in our natural dualism, we begin by taking the two terms, the mind and its object, as independent of each other. Then, as reflexion advances, we seek for some *tertium quid* which shall furnish a link of connexion between them. Lastly, as we become aware of the impossibility of finding any such *tertium quid*, we are apt to fall back on the paradox of Mysticism—that we know there is a unity of which we know nothing, and to which we approach only as we empty our minds of all positive contents. The truth is that, as the unity of the intelligence and the intelligible world is the first presupposition of all experience, it is not to be reached by abstraction, but rather by correcting the abstraction of our ordinary consciousness; by realising that unity which is always with us—underlying all our thought, though not directly apprehended by it—and only needing to be brought to light by reflexion. As Plato says of the definition of justice, we have been seeking for it far away while it was lying close at our feet. But we need not to search in the heights above or in the depths beneath for 'that which is in our mouth and in our heart.' If it is 'beyond reality,' it is because it is the substance of which all reality is the manifestation; if it is 'above knowledge,' it is only

in the sense that we must go beyond experience to realise what experience is.

The question has often been asked, whether the idea of Good is equivalent to the idea of God. I think we must answer that the unity of being and knowing, if we take it positively, cannot be conceived except as an absolute self-consciousness, a creative mind, whose only object is a universe which is the manifestation of itself. This aspect of the idea is not emphasised in the *Republic*, but it is obviously implied in it. Plato seems, in the first instance, to have regarded his 'ideas' mainly as objective realities —the word 'idea' itself at first suggesting a form or figure which we see, and then being transferred to the essence of the object as grasped by a thought which goes beyond its appearances. But here in the *Republic* Plato formulates a truth—which, no doubt, was very near him from the first, though not distinctly formulated—that the object is not complete apart from the thought which grasps it; and the term 'idea' is henceforth used by him to express this unity. Plato does not, like most moderns, begin with the subjective consciousness, and ask for an object corresponding to it: he begins with the object and goes on to realise that it is essentially an 'object thought,' an intelligible object. But when this point is reached the impersonal 'idea' begins to approximate to a consciousness or mind, and

we pass beyond idealism to spiritualism. Thus 'the Idea of Good' is only a step removed from the idea of a supreme intelligence, the νοῦς θεῖος of which Plato speaks in the *Philebus*.[1] We may therefore fairly say that, with the sixth book of the *Republic*, Plato has extended to the universe the Socratic conception of moral life, and has thereby become the founder of speculative theology.

[1] *Phil.*, 22 C, 28 D.

LECTURE SEVENTH.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEORY OF IDEAS.

In the *Republic* Plato puts the coping-stone upon his ideal theory by asserting not merely the existence of a number of independent ideas, but the systematic unity of all ideas under one supreme principle, a principle at once of all reality and of all thought. But, with this conception of the ultimate unity of all things with each other and with the mind, Plato's philosophy seems to enter upon a second stage of development, which carries him still farther away from the abstract idealism commonly attributed to him. For hitherto he has looked upon the idea mainly as a unifying principle—a principle which we need not, indeed, take as a mere abstraction, but which is so far abstract as it leaves out many of the aspects of the manifold and changing phenomena, and has no differences or determinations but such as flow from its own nature. There is, however, a great danger of misunderstanding when

such almost exclusive emphasis is laid upon the *unity* of the idea, as if it had no distinction of elements within itself at all; and this misunderstanding might go still farther in view of what Plato says as to the idea of good being 'beyond being' and 'beyond knowledge,' if this were taken as excluding its immanence in both.

It is, therefore, noticeable that in the dialogues which follow the *Republic* Plato begins to change his point of view, and to speak of it as the business of philosophy, not only to rise from difference to unity, but also to trace the way downwards from unity to difference and multiplicity. Already in the *Republic*, where the dialectician is primarily characterised as one who 'thinks things together,' it is indicated that, after he has reached the highest idea, he must seek to develop all the other ideas from it. But in the *Phaedrus* the two processes of synthesis and analysis, *συναγωγή* and *διαίρεσις*, are distinctly put on a level; and only he who is able rightly to perform them both is thought worthy of the name of a dialectician. He must be able, Plato declares, "to take a comprehensive view of the multitude of scattered particulars and to bring them under one form or idea, for the purpose of defining the nature of the special subject which he wishes to discover." But he must also "be able to divide into species, carefully attending to the natural joints by which the parts are

severed and connected, and not breaking any part, like a bad carver." "Of these processes," says the Platonic Socrates, "I have always been a lover, seeking by their means to make myself able to speak and to think. And if I can find anyone who is thus able to see up to the one and down to the many, I am ready to follow in his footsteps as if he were a God."[1]

Plato illustrates this view by a criticism of the teaching of rhetoric by some of the leading orators of the day, as resting upon a number of empirical rules about the use of words, about figures of speech, or about the commonplaces of argument, and not based upon any comprehensive view of the nature and object of oratory, and of the different elements and conditions that go to the making of an effective speech. In discussing the nature of anything, we must, he declares, first enquire whether it is simple or multiform; and, if it is simple, we must ask what capacity it has of acting upon other things and being acted on by them; while, if it has more forms than one, we must determine how many they are, and what capacity of acting or being acted on belongs to each of them. Without such a preliminary analysis, our procedure will be like the groping of a blind man. Now, as rhetoric has to act on the souls of men, we must begin in this case by asking what is the nature of the soul, and whether it is simple or multiform like

[1] *Phaedrus*, 266 B.

the body. Then we must enquire how it, or any part of it, acts or is acted on, and by what agencies. And, lastly, we must classify the different kinds of argument, as well as the different kinds of soul and the affections of which they are susceptible; and we must fit the several arguments to the several mental constitutions, and show how such and such souls are necessarily wrought upon by such and such discourses. If we proceed on this method, our rhetorical art will be not a collection of unconnected empirical rules, but a real scientific system; and any speech we construct in accordance with its prescriptions will be not an aggregate of unconnected arguments and exhortations, but an organised whole. In Plato's own words: "This, I think, you will admit, that every speech ought to be composed like a living being, which has a complete body of its own, and is neither without head nor without feet; in other words, it ought to have a beginning, middle, and end, all in harmony with each other and with the whole."[1]

This conception of the equal importance of distinction and relation, of analysis and synthesis, dominates all the later dialogues. Science is henceforth presented to us as an organised system of parts, which are clearly distinguished from each other, yet essentially bound together by the one idea or principle which is realised in them. In Plato's exposition of this view, however,

[1] *Phaedrus*, 264 c.

we find something of the same ambiguity which lay in his first account of the ideal theory. And, as there it was sometimes doubtful whether the idea was to be regarded as merely the abstraction of some common element in the particulars, or as a principle which explained their differences; so here, it is not quite clear whether Plato is merely referring to the division of a genus into subordinate species according to some arbitrarily chosen *principium divisionis*, or whether he means that the higher idea is to be taken as itself supplying the principle of its own division, and the subordinate ideas as having a necessary interconnexion, such that each implies and is implied in all the others. As, therefore, in the former case, we had to ask whether the idea is an abstract or a concrete universal, a common element or a principle which explains a certain compass of differences; so in the latter case, we have to ask whether the relations of the parts that fall under the idea is that of co-ordinate species which do not stand in any essential relation to each other, or whether it is that of parts which cannot be conceived except as belonging to one whole. Is Plato, after all, only aiming at a mere classification of different existences from an arbitrarily chosen point of view, or is he seeking to comprehend the intelligible world, and every distinct part of it, as a system of members which are in organic unity with each other?

It is not easy to solve this problem; indeed, it cannot be solved by a simple 'yes' or 'no.' For, in the first place, before we deal with it at all, we have to separate two questions which Plato does not always clearly distinguish—the question as to the *κόσμος νοητός*, the system of ideas when viewed in themselves, and the question as to the objects of the phenomenal world, which are said to participate in these ideas. In regard to the latter, it is abundantly evident that, according to Plato, particular phenomenal existences are subsumed under ideas without being completely determined by them. Indeed, it is the primary characteristic of the world of sense and opinion that the 'many' in it is not completely determined by the 'one'; or, in other words, that its differences and its changes are not the pure manifestation of ideal principles, but in many ways fall short of them. Of this relation of the phenomenal to the ideal world, I shall have to speak in a later lecture; for the present we have to consider the pure relation of ideas as elements in the intelligible world.

But, even from this point of view, the intention of Plato is not without some ambiguity, especially when we consider the way in which he employs the method of division in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus*. For in these dialogues he seeks to define an object simply by taking a large genus in which it is included, and dividing it into two species by any principle of

division that suggests itself; then, subsuming the object under one of the species, he proceeds again to divide that species by another arbitrary *principium divisionis*; and so on till he reaches an *infima species* which cannot be further divided. We can, however, hardly suppose that Plato means us to take this method quite seriously: indeed, the six examples of division by which the Eleatic stranger reaches the definition of the Sophist seem rather intended to exhibit the defects of such an arbitrary process, and to illustrate the fallacy which Aristotle points out when he says that division is a 'weak inference.' And we have to observe that in the latter part of the dialogue Plato directs all his efforts to illustrate a view of ideas and their relations, which is entirely opposed to this. Indeed, the aim of the whole remarkable group of dialogues which includes the *Theaetetus,* the *Sophist* and the *Parmenides,* seems to be just this—to develop the doctrine that universals are not abstractions but concrete principles of unity in difference; and that they have a community with each other, which we can only express by saying that each contains or involves all the others.

This view of ideas seems to have arisen in Plato's mind in connexion with a careful study of the conflicting views of the earlier Greek philosophers which, till this period, had not received much attention from

him.[1] The controversy between the two great schools, that of the Eleatics who insisted upon the unity and permanence of objects, and that of the Heracliteans who insisted exclusively upon their multiplicity and changefulness—suggested to Plato the idea that neither of them could be regarded as adequate, and that the truth must lie in some *tertium quid*, which should at once transcend and combine them both. Hence he declares in the *Theaetetus* that it is above all necessary for us to examine carefully the two opposite theories of those who set everything in flux and of those who would make all reality immovable. And then he adds that "if we find that neither of these schools has anything reasonable to say, we shall be absurd enough to think that we, poor creatures, are able to suggest something to the purpose, while we reject the views of ancient and famous men."[2] If, therefore, the ideal theory were to vindicate its claims, it must show itself able to unite the 'one' and the 'many,' and to prove that they are not absolutely opposed but rather require each other. Accordingly in these dia-

[1] Aristotle (*Metaph.*, I. 6) says that the development of the ideal theory was due to a combination of the Socratic view of universals with a conception of sensation and its objects due to the philosophy of Heraclitus. But we do not find this connexion of Sensationalism with the Heraclitean philosophy referred to except in the *Theaetetus*, and the earlier development of the ideal theory in the *Meno*, *Gorgias*, *Symposium*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic* does not appear to be connected with any direct Heraclitean influence.

[2] *Theaetetus*, 181 B.

logues Plato seeks to prove, on the one hand, that the views of these two schools are one-sided and self-contradictory, and, on the other hand, that the ideal theory is able to take up into itself the elements of truth that are in both. And it is important to notice that he directs his criticism both against the objective aspect of these philosophies, as theories of being, and against their subjective aspect, as theories of knowing; and that from this point of view he identifies the Heraclitean philosophy with Sensationalism, and the Eleatic philosophy with an abstract Idealism which might find some support in his own earlier statement of the ideal theory.

Thus, in the *Theaetetus* Plato deals at once with the Protagorean doctrine that finds the measure of all things in the sensation of the individual, and with the doctrine of Heraclitus that all things are in flux; and he attempts to show that, both severally and together, they lead to the result that nothing exists or can be known. For if the Heraclitean view be true, and everything is in continual process, ever becoming other than itself, no determination either of quality or quantity can remain even for a moment, and nothing can be said even to be. If there be nothing permanent, there is no reality in anything. And this, again, implies that no knowledge is possible; for, *ex hypothesi*, there is nothing left to characterise the object as one thing rather than its

opposite; and that which is always changing in every aspect of it, can not be known even as changing. Again, looking at the question from the side of the subject "pure Sensationalism is speechless"; for we can neither distinguish one sensation from, nor identify it with another, unless our thought goes beyond the sensation itself. "There is, therefore, no knowledge in the impressions of sense, but only in the discourse of reason in regard to them."[1]

In the *Sophist*, again, the same results are shown to follow from the opposite doctrine, that is, from the abstract Eleatic assertion of the absolute unity and permanence of being; for, if no difference be admitted in the aspects of the One, we cannot say anything about it. Even to affirm that 'the One is,' implies some distinction between being and unity. Every predication, in short, if it means anything, involves a relative difference between the subject and the predicate, and bare identity means nothing at all. Similar reasons make it impossible to give any meaning to a permanence which is without change, movement or activity. Neither absolute motion without rest nor absolute rest without motion can be conceived, but only the union of the two—that which combines motion and rest, or which

[1] *Theaet.*, 186 D. ἐν μὲν ἄρα τοῖς παθήμασιν οὐκ ἔνι ἐπιστήμη, ἐν δὲ τῷ περὶ ἐκείνων συλλογισμῷ. Of course, syllogism has not yet its technical sense.

rests in one point of view and moves in another.[1] But if in this way pure unity and permanence, and pure diversity and change be proved to be each of them unintelligible, if they can neither be nor be known, what is the necessary inference? It is obviously that the only thing that can either be, or be known, is the one-in-the-many, the permanent-in-change. The Eleatic and the Heraclitean theories equally failed, because they attempted to divorce two elements which are inseparably united.

This result Plato immediately applies to the ideal theory. By its aid he sets aside the ordinary conception of ideas as self-referent abstractions, which are without any difference in themselves and without any relation to each other—a conception which had derived some support from the language of Plato himself in his earlier dialogues. Even in the *Republic*, he had spoken as if any community or connexion between different ideas would be a source of confusion as to their real nature.[2] But now he points out that, if ideas are to be conceived as principles of being and of knowledge, they cannot be taken as abstract identities without difference, or as unmoved types unrelated to each other and to the mind. As *principia essendi*, they must be unities of differences, and each of them must have a definite place in the system of the whole,

[1] *Sophist*, 249, 3. [2] *Rep.*, 476 A.

differentiated from the others and yet related to them; and as *principia cognoscendi*, they must have community or relationship with the mind, and they must be conceived as forms of its activity as well as of the activity of the object.

In the *Parmenides*, this view is confirmed by an examination of the ideal theory with special reference to the problem of the one and the many. Plato begins the discussion by casting contempt on the easy dialectical tricks of the sophists and rhetoricians, who proved that the one is also many, only by pointing out that the same individual in spite of his identity has many parts or attributes. But the true question of the one and the many relates to the difference and unity of these ideas in themselves, and not as they may be accidentally combined in one subject. "If, then, any one should attempt to show that the one and the many are the same, taking for his illustration the case of stones or trees and the like, we shall say that he shows, indeed, that something is at once one and many, but not that the one itself is many, or the many one. Thus he does not tell us anything worthy of wonder, but only what anyone can see for himself. But if, as I have just said, he were first to divide such pairs of ideas and set each idea by itself—say, the ideas of similarity and dissimilarity, of the one and the many, of rest and motion—and

should then show that these opposites are capable of being combined and separated, I should be greatly surprised."[1] Parmenides, however, proceeds to show that this result at which Socrates would wonder so much, can be actually realised: firstly, by a criticism of the theory of ideas, viewed as abstract universals; and secondly, by following out the hypotheses of the existence and of the non-existence of both of the one and of the many, in all the various senses in which these hypotheses can be taken.

In the first part of this investigation Plato shows the difficulties of the ideal theory, so long as ideas are taken as the common elements in various particulars, and yet at the same time as independent substances. For then, he asks, what can be meant by saying that many things participate in the same ideas? If the idea be an independent substance, like a sail drawn over many objects,[2] it is impossible that it should be wholly in each of the things that participate in it: yet it would be absurd to suppose that it was divided among them; for, in that case, it would cease to be one idea, and would thus lose all its meaning. Again, if the idea corresponds merely

[1] *Parmenides*, 129 D. It might be suggested that by putting this into the mouth of Socrates, Plato was acknowledging that there was a time when it applied to himself.

[2] *Parm.*, 131 B.

to the common element in many particular subjects which in other respects are different from each other, it will not be essentially related to these subjects, and cannot explain their existence. It will only be accidentally present in them along with their other qualities; or if it be essentially bound up with them, it must be through some third idea.[1] But, again, if that third idea be only a common element in the first idea and the particular subjects brought under it, it will only be accidentally related to both, and a fresh idea will be required to establish connexion between them; and so on *ad infinitum*. Nor will it alter the case if we suppose that the idea is an abstract type, and the subjects are merely like it; for if likeness requires an idea to explain it, we again fall back into the same *processus in infinitum*. It appears, then, that we can explain nothing particular by means of an abstract universal.

There is obviously no way out of these difficulties, so long as the idea is taken simply as a common element in a number of species and individuals, and not as a principle which manifests itself in their difference and binds them together into one systematic whole. Such an organic principle alone can be conceived as whole in all the parts brought under

[1] *Parm.*, 132 A. This is the τρίτος ἄνθρωπος argument, which is so often mentioned by Aristotle, though he takes no notice of the discussion of it in the *Parmenides*.

it, and, therefore, as needing no *tertium quid* to unite it with them. Now, looking to the way in which, both in the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*, Plato seeks to carry us beyond the abstract theories of the earlier schools, we cannot but suppose that his intent is to bring us to this conclusion, that is, to make us accept the doctrine that the true universal or idea is a concrete or organic principle, which is one with itself in all the diversity of its manifestations; though, as is often the case, his dialectic is negative rather than positive, and he leaves us to draw the inference for ourselves.

Still more important is the application of the same method to the relation between ideas and the mind. If ideas be taken as objective principles, complete in themselves apart from any relation to our thought, Plato argues that they can be nothing for us; and the objects of knowledge, though called by the same names as the ideas, will have no relation to them. They will be completely transcendent and removed from our consciousness; and, if there be any consciousness which grasps them, it will have no community or connexion with our minds. Yet, on the other hand, if we reject this hypothesis, and take ideas merely as our thoughts, which, as such, exist only in our minds, they will be reduced to subjective affections; and it will be impossible to explain how through them we

can know anything objective. It is, however, absurd to regard thoughts in this way, as mere subjective states of an individual consciousness. "Why," asks Parmenides, "must not a thought be a thought of something? And, if so, must it not be the thought of one definite object? And must not this object be an ideal form, which remains the same in all cases in which it is realised?"[1] In other words, Plato points out that the conceptualist hypothesis here suggested will not help us out of any of the difficulties involved in objective idealism; and that, indeed, it involves an *ignoratio elenchi*. For ideas or universals cannot be taken as mere states of mind referring to nothing beyond themselves. But if not—if through universals we know anything—this implies that in some sense they are in the objects known through them, as well as in our minds; and, indeed, that they are just the principles that give definiteness and unity to these objects, and make them capable of being known.

But if we can neither say that ideas are real principles without relation to mind, nor yet reduce them to states of mind, if, in other words, we can neither treat them as purely objective nor as purely subjective, what follows? Obviously the only remaining alternative is that the distinction between thought and reality, subjective and objective, must

[1] *Parm.*, 132 c.

be regarded as a relative difference—a distinction between factors in a unity, which imply each other and which cannot be separated. On this view reality cannot be conceived except as the object of thought, nor thought except as the consciousness of reality. On the one hand, to take reality as complete in itself apart from thought, or as only accidentally related to thought, is essentially to misconceive its nature; for every characteristic by which objects are determined as such, can be shown to involve their relation to a conscious subject; and the attempt to abstract from this relation would compel us to treat them as unknowable—as something external to the life of the subject, and which, therefore, the consciousness of the subject cannot reach. Indeed, it would be impossible on this hypothesis to explain how even the imagination of such objective reality should ever present itself to consciousness at all. On the other hand, it is equally irrational to take thoughts as mere states of the subject without reference to reality; for it is in such objective reference that all their meaning lies. Indeed, apart from such reference, we could not apprehend them even as states of the subject.

We must, then, regard an *idea*, in the Platonic sense, as a principle which transcends the distinction of subject and object, of thought and reality, and which manifests itself in both. We are not,

indeed, required to deny that there is an accidental, or merely subjective aspect of knowledge—as realised in a finite individual and under the special conditions of an individual life; but we can never take the consciousness of an object as a mere state or quality of the individual subject, as determined by such conditions. We must regard such consciousness, however partial and inadequate it be, as the manifestation in an individual form of the one principle which is the source of all being and all thought. While, therefore, we uphold the relative distinction of thought and reality, we must be careful not to elevate it into an absolute difference; for this would leave us with, on the one side, an idea which is merely a state of the subject, and, on the other side, a reality which is unknowable. We must repel the Berkeleian tendency to dissolve objects into 'mere ideas'; but at the same time we must remember that as objects they are relative to the subject; for reality as intelligible implies the intelligence, and the intelligence, on its part, is nothing except as conscious of reality. We cannot understand either the process of being or the process of thought, unless we realise that they are only different aspects or stages of the same process; and that, in their utmost divergence, they are held within the unity of one principle or, as Plato expresses it, of one *idea*.

But when we adopt this view of ideas, we are led

to a further result, which also is recognised by Plato. As we have seen, Plato requires us to conceive the idea as the unity of the opposite principles of the Eleatics and the Heracliteans, and, therefore, as combining in itself unity and difference, permanence and change. This, however, means that an idea must be conceived as a self-determining or active principle; since only that which is self-determined can be said to transcend these oppositions, to maintain its unity in difference and its permanence in change. It alone can combine movement with rest, because its activity has its source and end in itself. But where are we to find such a self-determined principle? It is obviously a conception which can find its realisation, or at least its adequate realisation, only in a mind. Hence we do not wonder to find Plato declaring that "Being in the full sense of the word (*τὸ παντελῶς ὄν*) cannot be conceived without motion and life, without soul and mind."[1] In other words, ideas, merely as such, are deposed from the highest place as principles of thought and reality and the place is taken by souls or minds. Accordingly, in the *Phædrus*, in a passage to which we shall have to return, the soul is spoken of as the one principle which is immortal and unchangeable, because it alone is self-moved or self-determined and, therefore, the cause of all determination or

[1] *Sophist*, 248 E.

change in other things.[1] And it is obviously impossible to admit such a conception of soul or mind without depriving ideas, as such, of the position which they have hitherto occupied.

But with this a new difficulty arises: for, if "reality in the full sense of the word" be only found in souls or minds, what are we to make of other objects? Are we to say that they are unreal appearances? Then we shall have escaped the paradox of subjective idealism—that the only objects we know are our ideas as states of our subjectivity—only to fall into what we may call the paradox of objective idealism, that the only objects which we can recognise as such are minds. This difficulty does not escape Plato; and accordingly we find him arguing in the *Parmenides* that, if things participate in ideas, and ideas are thoughts, we are reduced to the dilemma, either that 'all things think,' that is, that all things are minds: or, that "they are thoughts which exist without being in any mind that thinks them."[2] But, if we reject the second alternative as absurd, we seem to be driven to the conclusion that nothing has real existence except minds and their

[1] *Phaedrus*, 245 c. It is to be noted that the dialogue in which Plato first speaks of the soul as self-moving and immortal is also the dialogue in which he first asserts that dialectic is a process both of analysis and synthesis, and that its object is to attain to a systematic view of things.

[2] *Parm.*, 132 c. *νοήματα ὄντα ἀνόητα εἶναι.*

states, and that all other existence is an illusory appearance. Can this conclusion be taken as in any sense reasonable? And, if so, what is Plato's attitude towards it?

Now, there is a sense in which every idealist must admit that the only object of mind is mind. Everyone who holds that the real is relative to mind, and, therefore, that the difference between mind and its object cannot be an absolute difference, must acknowledge that whatever is real, (and just so far as it is real,) has the nature of mind manifested in it. Reality cannot be alien to the subject that knows it, nor can the intelligence comprehend any object except as it finds *itself* in it. In other words, objects can be recognised as real, only if, and so far as, they have that unity in difference, that permanence in change, that intelligible individuality, which are the essential characteristics of mind.[1] At least we can regard an object as an independent and substantial existence only in so far as it possesses such characteristics.

It is not, however, necessary to infer from this that every object, which is in any sense real, 'thinks,' or is a conscious subject; for we do not need to take reality as a simple predicate, which must be attached to everything in exactly the same sense. We may, and, indeed, we must admit that there are

[1] *Rep.* 477 A. τὸ παντελῶς ὂν παντελῶς γνωστόν.

what Mr. Bradley calls differences of degree, or what might perhaps even be regarded as differences of kind, in reality. In its highest sense the term 'real' can be predicated only of a *res completa*, of that which is complete in itself, determined by itself, and, therefore, capable of being explained entirely from itself. But this does not involve the denial of reality even to the most transient of phenomena, if it be but as a phase of something more substantial than itself. There is a certain gradation in the being of things, according to the measure of their independence. From this point of view, every systematic whole must stand higher in the order of reality than an aggregate of unconnected, or externally connected parts; and a living being in its organic individuality would be regarded as more real than any inorganic thing. In the sphere of the organic, again, we may find many grades of being, from the simplest vegetable cell up to the highest and most complex of animals. But while all such beings are conceived as in a sense substantial, in so far as their existence is referred to a centre in themselves, it is only in man that we find that permanent self-identity, that unity with himself in all difference and change, which is needed fully to satisfy our conception of substantial reality. He only can be properly said to have a self, since he only is fully conscious of it. And it is only as self-conscious

that he is able to refer all things to himself and so to generate a new world for himself; or, if we prefer to put it so, to reconstitute the common world of all from a fresh individual centre. Even here, however, we cannot stop; for no finite spirit is complete in itself. As finite, he is part of a greater whole, the member of a society which itself is but one phase of humanity, conditioned by all the other phases of it, and, indeed, by all the other elements that enter into the constitution of the universe. We can, therefore, find that which is absolutely real or substantial only in a creative mind, from whom all things and beings must be conceived as deriving whatever reality or substantiality they possess.

Now, if we adopt this point of view, it is possible to regard all objective reality as kindred with the intelligence, without going on to assert that nothing exists except minds and their states. In other words, it is possible to maintain that every intelligible object is a partial form or expression of the same principle which is fully expressed in the intelligence, without denying the relative reality either of the inorganic or the organic world, and without, on the other hand, treating every mind as an absolutely self-determined being.

We cannot, however, without much qualification, attribute any such conception to Plato. Plato, indeed, speaks of grades of being, but only in

connexion with the theory of metempsychosis; that is, he speaks only of the grades of elevation or degradation through which the individual soul may pass. All organised beings, or rather we should say all animals—for nothing is said of plants—are conceived by Plato as having in them a principle of self-determination to which he gives the name of a soul; and all souls are treated as fundamentally identical in nature. But this nature is shown in its purity only in the Divine Being; or, if in men, only in those men in whom the intelligence reaches its highest development; and, pre-eminently, in the philosopher who has grasped the central idea of good, and, therefore, beholds all things *sub specie aeternitatis*. And while the soul thus can rise to the highest, it can also sink to the lowest, becoming more and more immersed in the body, till the life of intelligence is lost in the obscure animal motions of sensation and appetite. So far, therefore, all real or substantial objects are conceived by Plato as souls or minds, in a more or less elevated or degraded condition. The doctrine of metempsychosis, in fact, enables him to hold that, in the strict sense of the word, reality is confined to souls or minds, without thereby denying that it belongs to every being that has life, or at least animal life, in it. On the other hand, when we descend further in the scale of being, this mode of explanation fails him, and Plato, it would seem, must

be driven either to regard all inorganic objects as mere appearances, or else to imagine that they are somehow living and organic. And the latter alternative he would be obliged to reject; for, as the body is conceived as obscuring and thwarting the life of the soul, it cannot be referred to the same principle with that life; and its existence, even as an appearance, becomes a difficult problem. We are therefore compelled to recognise that at this point Plato's idealism passes into dualism; and it becomes necessary for us to enquire into the exact form which his dualism finally took—a question which must be answered mainly from the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus*.

Before, however, we can deal with this subject, we have to consider more fully Plato's doctrine of the soul, and, particularly, his treatment of the question of immortality.

LECTURE EIGHTH.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL AND THE IDEA OF GOD.

In the last lecture I endeavoured to show how Plato was led by a consideration of the opposing theories of the Eleatic and Heraclitean schools, to develop and correct his own theory of ideas. In his earlier account of that theory he had dwelt, with somewhat one-sided emphasis, on the contrast between the relative and shifting character of phenomena and the absolute unity and permanence of the ideal objects of knowledge. He had sometimes even spoken as if each of these objects was an independent and unchangeable unity, which was to be apprehended by itself, apart from all relation to the others. It is probable, however, that such statements were intended by Plato only to bring out clearly the difference between knowledge and opinion; and their inadequacy was partly corrected by the way in which all the ideas were referred back to the one central Idea of Good.

Still the difficulty was not removed till, by the conflict of the earlier schools, Plato was led to realise the equal importance of analysis and synthesis, and to define the idea as the unity of identity and difference, of rest and motion. When this step was taken, the vague consciousness of the unity of all ideas with each other through the Idea of Good, which had been expressed in the *Republic*, at once developed into the conception of a community or connexion of ideas, as distinct yet organically related elements of one intelligible whole.

At the same time, another process is going on in the mind of Plato. His early idealism had been essentially objective. The idea was primarily that which is absolutely real in the objective world as contrasted with the appearances of sense. It was the permanent essence of the thing which the name designated; in Plato's own words, it was 'the good itself,' 'the beautiful itself,' 'the equal itself'; and the fact that it was recognised as such by the mind was secondary and derivative. But already in the *Republic* more attention is drawn to the subjective aspect of the intelligible reality, and the Idea of Good is regarded as at once and co-ordinately the principle of knowing and the principle of being. And in the *Phaedrus* and the *Sophist* this change is carried still farther, and soul or mind is treated as itself the principle of all thought and reality.

Now, these stages in the development of Plato's thought are clearly reflected in his argument for the immortality of the soul, an argument which does not remain stationary, but is extended, modified, and developed through a succession of dialogues. In its earliest and most imperfect form, it is an attempt to prove the immortality of the soul through the special nature of its idea; but this gradually passes into an endeavour to show that the soul is immortal in its own right. Thus souls or minds come to be regarded, not as beings whose substantial reality has to be proved by anything else, but as beings which contain in themselves the principle of all reality, and therefore of all proof. Finally, there is a still farther regress, by which all individual minds are referred back to one supreme intelligence, who is the 'first mover' of all things, and who communicates life and intelligence to all other minds or souls. It is, therefore, essential to a comprehension of Plato's idealism, or rather, as we may call it, his spiritualism, that we should carefully follow out the different phases of this argument.

In the beginning of the *Phaedo* the immortality of the soul is conceived as involving, and involved in, its pre-existence; and the proof of both is derived from the somewhat mythical conception of knowledge as reminiscence, a conception of which I have already spoken in an earlier lecture. As the knowledge of universals is drawn out of the soul, and not simply

put into it by direct experience or by teaching, it is attributed to the memory of a former state of existence, a memory which has become dulled and obscured by the descent of the spirit into the world of sense. This memory may be revived by reflexion and dialectic, though it cannot be completely restored till death liberates the soul from the body and its affections. The soul, therefore, is to be conceived as remaining unchanged in its essential nature through all the processes of birth and death; as being many times born into the sensible world and departing from it again, but ever maintaining the continuity of its life, and carrying with it, in a more or less explicit form, all the knowledge it ever possessed.

This suggestive poetic conception has been used by a modern poet for the same purpose. In his great "Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of early Childhood," Wordsworth, like Plato, connects the idea of immortality with that of pre-existence, and finds the proof of both in those 'shadowy recollections' of something better, which haunt us from our earliest years: in

> "Those first affections, those shadowy recollections,
> Which, be they what they may,
> Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
> Are yet the master-light of all our seeing,
> Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of an eternal silence."

There are, however, two great changes in the Wordsworthian reproduction of the Platonic myth. In the first place, Wordsworth seems to say that the child is nearest to its heavenly origin, and most clearly remembers it, and that, as we go on in life,

> "the vision dies away,
> And fades into the light of common day."

Plato, on the other hand, has no sentiment about childhood, but holds that the soul at its first coming into the body is crushed and overwhelmed by its mortal nature, and loses all memory of the higher life in which it has partaken; but that, as it grows to maturity, reminiscences of its past glories may be re-awakened in it. They may be re-awakened, in the first place, in a sensuous imaginative form, by beautiful objects which are "a shadow of good things, but not the perfect image of those things": and then again in a more distinct and self-conscious way, they may be recalled by philosophical reflexion, which enables us to apprehend the truth in its own universal or ideal nature. And from this follows the second point of difference between Wordsworth and Plato, namely, that for Wordsworth the highest consciousness to which the soul can attain, is connected with certain vague imaginative suggestions or intuitions which cannot be defined or reduced to any distinct form:

> "Those obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,

Fallings from us, vanishings,
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts, before which our mortal nature
Doth tremble like a guilty thing surprised."

By Plato, on the other hand, all such symbolic and imaginative modes of consciousness are regarded as a mere foretaste and anticipation of knowledge,—a preparatory stage, in which the mind is satisfied with what is at best a 'noble untruth'; whereas the pure truth of things, as they really are, can only be apprehended by the reflexion of the philosopher, who grasps the universal and defines it, and who by it is enabled to gather all the different aspects of reality into a systematic unity.

With this half-mythical idea of reminiscence, however, Plato immediately associates the more pregnant conception that, in rising to the universal, the mind is not so much going back into the past as going deeper into itself. The intelligence that grasps the universal must have something in itself that is kindred thereto; it must have something of that permanent and substantial reality, that simplicity and unity with itself, which belongs to the ideal object it apprehends. It is, therefore, estranged from itself so long as its thought is turned only to that which is sensible and particular; and, in awaking to that which is spiritual and universal, it is, as it were, coming to itself again. Nor can it be touched by death: for

death only breaks its connexion with the world of sense, and so delivers it from that "muddy vesture of decay," which obstructs its vision of the eternal, and prevents it from recognising its kinship therewith. Here, as elsewhere in the *Phaedo*, Plato seems to yield to the mystic tendency to exaggerate the opposition between the intelligible and the sensible, and to dwell upon that aspect of universals in which they appear as pure ideal unities freed from all the accidents of finite existence. And his argument is simply that the soul, in so far as it is capable of grasping such ideas, must be, like them, lifted above time and change. Plato, therefore, is not yet prepared to maintain that the soul in its own right is immortal, still less to assert that it is the self-determining principle which determines all other things, the substantial being that underlies and gives origin to all other reality. He still treats it as a particular existence, which must be proved to be immortal through its special relation to the ideal and eternal.

Nor does he go much beyond this point of view even in the curious argument which concludes the dialogue, and which he seems to regard as its most important result. The idea of the soul, he there contends, presupposes the idea of life; and it cannot be separated from life, any more than the idea of evenness can be separated from the number two, or

the idea of oddness from the number three. Hence, just because the idea of life is involved in the idea of the soul, the soul must live for ever.

We have here a close parallel to the ontological argument for the being of God—the argument that God necessarily exists, because existence is involved in the conception of Him as a perfect being. And both arguments seem open to the same objection. To the ontological argument it is objected that we cannot pass from thought to existence by means of another thought, but only by means of some *tertium quid*, if such can be found, which shall connect thought with existence. What is wanted is to prove that a being corresponding to the idea of perfection exists; and it is an obvious evasion of the point to say that this requirement is satisfied because the idea of existence is included in the idea of perfection. And equally fallacious is it to attempt to bridge the gulf between the idea of the soul and its eternal existence by saying that life is essentially involved in that idea. Hence Teichmüller contends with good reason that all that Plato has proved is that the idea of the soul—that ideal reality of which all souls partake, but with which none of them is identified—is immortal and eternal like all other ideas. In other words, he contends that Plato only gives us a relation of ideas; and that, even if we grant to him that ideas

are eternal principles, yet he has himself taught us that the same does not hold good of their particular embodiments. And it is a mere quibble to say that this case is an exception, because the idea in question is the idea of life; for, *ex hypothesi*, an idea is distinguished from particular existences, just by the fact that it is eternal, while they are ever changing, ever becoming and passing away.

Now, there is a way of repelling the objection to the ontological argument for the being of God; though only, it must be confessed, by inverting it, or challenging the presuppositions on which it was originally based. That argument, as it is usually stated, starts with the assumption of an essential division between thought and being in general, and then seeks for some special means of transcending that division in the case of the idea of God. But, instead of assuming such a dualism to begin with, we may ask on what grounds it can be asserted. In other words, we may ask on what grounds existence is separated from thought, and thought from existence. When we look at the question in this way, as I tried to show in dealing with the Idea of Good, it becomes clear that the distinction of thought and reality is not an absolute one. It corresponds, indeed, to a real difference, but that difference presupposes an identity which is beyond it. There is an ultimate unity between thought

and reality, which is postulated in the very act of opposing them, and without which that act itself would be meaningless; for consciousness always presupposes a relation between the elements it distinguishes, and therefore a unity which transcends the distinction. If the subject asserts his own existence in distinction from the existence of the objective world, he *ipso facto* presupposes the unity of the whole, in which both subjective and objective are factors. And the principle of that unity must be recognised by it as the principle at once of knowing and being; that is, it must be recognised as the Divine Being. Thus, if we assert the existence of the mind that knows in opposition to the world that is known, we must also assert the existence of God. We must recognise the absolute Being who transcends the distinction of self and not-self, as a principle apart from which neither the one nor the other can have any reality or meaning. While, therefore, we cannot argue from the thought of God to His existence as an object, we can make a regress from the opposition of thought and reality to God as the unity implied in that opposition.

Is it possible to make a similar transformation of Plato's argument for the immortality of the soul? And, if so, does Plato himself make it? It is at once obvious that, in order to do so in the case of the soul, Plato must transcend that

absolute opposition of the universal and the individual, which Teichmüller and others have regarded as the essential characteristic of his philosophy. He must conceive the soul as possessed of what might be called a 'universal individuality,' *i.e.* an individuality which is one with its idea, and which, therefore, partakes of the eternity that belongs to the idea. Now, the argument by which, in the *Phaedo*, Plato endeavoured to secure an exceptional position for the soul, is certainly fallacious as he has there stated it; but we find that, in later dialogues, he gave it another and less ambiguous form. For there we find him maintaining, not that the soul is immortal because it partakes in the idea of life, but that the ultimate principle of life, as of all substantial reality, is the soul. We may clearly trace the development of this thought in the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus*.

In the *Republic* Plato lays down the principle that a thing can be destroyed only by its own evil, by that which specially mars and corrupts its own nature. Hence the soul cannot be injured by the diseases of the body or destroyed by its death, except in so far as these bring with them evils that directly affect the soul itself, namely, the evils of injustice and intemperance, folly and ignorance. But can the soul be destroyed even by these its own diseases? On the contrary, we often find that its

vitality, the intense activity of its life, shows itself just in and through its vices. "The injustice, which will murder others, keeps the murderer alive—aye, and well awake too; so far removed is her dwelling-place from being a house of death." If, then, the soul cannot be destroyed even by its own peculiar and characteristic evils, it is absurd to think that it can receive any vital injury from the death of the body, which is not in itself connected with such evils. As no one can say that the decay of the body makes us more unjust, there is no reason to believe that the soul is affected by its death. Hence Plato contends that the soul is an absolutely permanent substance; that, therefore, the number of souls must always remain the same, neither increased nor diminished; and that all that their connexion with mortal bodies can do is for a time to obscure and dim their brightness. But, he goes on, "in order to see the soul as she really is, not as we now behold her marred by communion with the body, we must contemplate her with the eye of reason in her original purity; for, as she is now, she is like the sea-god Glaucon, whose original image can hardly be discerned, because his natural members are broken off and crushed and damaged by the waves, and incrustations have grown over them of seaweed and shells and stones, so that he is more like a monster than his natural form."

But "we must regard her higher nature as shown in her love of wisdom, and in her yearning for the divine to which she is akin."[1]

Now, if we translate this into more modern terms, I think we can see that Plato means that the soul, in so far as it is capable of intellectual and moral life, has a universal principle, or perhaps we should say, *the* universal principle in it. Hence no influence can come to it from without which is capable of destroying it. No calamity which affects only its body or its mortal individuality can be fatal to its own life. For though, in one aspect of it, it is a particular finite being, subject to all the accidents and changes of mortality, there is that within it which lifts it above them all. We might add—though this perhaps would be going beyond what Plato says in this place and putting positively what he puts only negatively—that it can not only rise above them, but can also turn them into the means of its own development. Outward misfortune and even death, as Socrates had shown, it can treat with indifference, and even use them as an opportunity for the exercise and manifestation of its own spiritual energy. And as regards what Plato calls its own proper evils, though undoubtedly the soul may be divided against itself and weakened by vice and folly, yet even they cannot penetrate to

[1] *Rep.*, 611 D.

the deepest principle of its spiritual life; they cannot destroy its self-conscious or rational nature, and therefore they cannot be incurable. Nay, the universal principle of spiritual life enables it to turn even its own failures and sins into 'stepping-stones' upon which it may 'climb to higher things.' If this is going beyond Plato's exact words, it seems to be a natural inference from the principle he here lays down, that the soul cannot be destroyed by its own evil, much less by any other kind of evil.

The more positive expression of the same idea, however, is found in the *Phaedrus*. In that dialogue Plato gives us a myth in which the soul of man is described as a charioteer, driving a chariot with two horses—which of course represents the reason in its control over the higher and lower impulses, *θυμός* and *ἐπιθυμία*. The soul-chariot follows the procession of the gods in their journey round the universe, and tries like them to rise above the apex of heaven to the vision of ideal reality, the vision of essential truth and goodness and beauty: but its wings often fail to carry it high enough. And when they fail, it sinks downward to the earth, and becomes the tenant of a mortal body. In connexion with this wonderful symbolic myth on which Plato lavishes all the treasures of his imagination, he suddenly turns from poetry to philosophy, and argues that the soul, as such, is immortal, because it is self-moved or

self-determined: "Soul in every case is immortal," he contends, "for what is ever in motion is immortal, but that which moves another and is moved by another, in ceasing to move, ceases also to live. Only the self-moving, as it never abandons itself, never ceases to move, and is the fountain and beginning of motion to all that moves beside. Now, a beginning or principle cannot have come into being at any time, for that which comes into being must have a beginning or principle from which it comes, but the principle itself cannot come out of anything else: for if the principle came out of anything else, it would show itself not to be a principle. But, again, what never begins to be must also be indestructible: for, if the principle were destroyed, it could not rise into being out of anything else, nor anything else out of it, since all things must come from a principle. The beginning or principle of motion must, therefore, be found in that which moves itself, and it can itself have neither death nor birth; otherwise the whole universe and the whole process of creation would collapse and be brought to a stand, and no path back into motion and existence would remain possible. If, however, we say that that is immortal which is moved by itself, we need have no scruple in asserting that this is the very essence and idea of the soul. For any body which has the principle of its motion

outside of itself is 'soulless,' while that which has its principle of motion within and from itself, is 'possessed of a soul,'—implying that this is the very nature of soul. But if it be granted that that which moves itself is soul, then of necessity the soul is unbegotten and immortal." [1]

This idea of the soul as the first mover is a very important one in the history of philosophy and theology, and we shall have to discuss it more fully hereafter in connexion with the views of Aristotle. Here I need only say what is necessary for the explanation of its place in the system of Plato. In this view, we have, in the first place, to remember that the term 'motion' is used by Plato in a wider sense than we commonly attach to it, as meaning not only change of place, but activity in general. For in the former sense motion always implies the action of one thing upon another, and absolute self-movement is a contradiction in terms. What Plato means, therefore, is that the soul has in itself an original principle of activity, a principle of self-consciousness and self-determination. He thus carries the idea suggested in the *Republic* a step farther: for, while

[1] *Phaedrus*, 245 c. The great difficulty in translating this passage is that in it Plato's language is in the very process of changing from figure to thought, or, as a German would express it, from the *Vorstellung* to the *Begriff*. He is in the act of making philosophic terms out of words in common use. Thus ἀρχή is just passing from 'beginning' to 'principle,' γένεσις from 'birth' to 'becoming' in general, and κίνησις from 'motion' to 'activity' in general.

in that dialogue we have the negative thought, that the soul cannot be destroyed by any evil derived from another than itself, in the *Phaedrus* we have the positive counterpart of this, that it is determined, and can only be determined, by itself. It has a universal nature and, therefore, it transcends all limits or hindrances that can be put upon it by other things. They cannot affect it, or they can affect it only indirectly through its own action. Even its confinement in a mortal body is represented as the result of its own fall from its previous high estate; and the nature of the body in which it is imprisoned, as well as its whole lot in this world, is said to be fixed by its own inner state. "The soul is form and doth the body make": it creates its own environment, and in successive births it rises and falls in its outward estate, according to the goodness or badness of its actions: *αἰτία ἑλομένου, θεὸς ἀναίτιος*.[1] It is then Plato's doctrine in the *Phaedrus* that 'all soul'—and here he makes no distinction between different grades of souls or even between the divine being and other souls—is self-moving or self-determined, and has a spring of eternal energy in itself; and that, though its spiritual life may be darkened and obstructed, it can never be destroyed. For soul is the principle of all reality both in itself and in all other things. "The soul

[1] *Rep.*, 417 E.

in its totality," he declares,[1] "has the care of all inanimate or soulless being everywhere, and traverses the whole universe, appearing in divers forms. When it is perfect and its wings have fully grown, it soars upward and orders the whole world; but when it loses its wings, it sinks downward, till it reaches the solid ground and takes up its abode in an earthly body, which seems to move of itself but is really moved by the soul. And this compound of soul and body is called a living and mortal creature: for immortal no such union can be believed to be, though our sensuous imagination, not having seen or known the nature of God, may picture him as an immortal creature having a body and a soul which are united through all time."

It appears, then, that in the *Phaedrus* the soul is taken as the principle of all things, to which all movement—all activity and actuality—must ultimately be referred. It is the one absolutely universal, and therefore absolutely individual existence, which determines itself and is not determined by anything else, and which for that reason is immortal and eternal. Thus souls seem to attract to themselves the characteristics of ideas, or, at least, to take the place of ideas, as ultimate principles of being and knowing. Further, Plato seems to attribute soul in this sense, not only to men, but to all living

[1] *Phaedrus*, 246 B.

creatures. At least he regards them all as alike in the fundamental principle of their being, however the manifestation of it may be obstructed by the kind of body with which it has become associated. In short, as I have before explained, all life for Plato is the life of intelligence, more or less adequately realised. While, therefore, in all souls that are incarnated in bodies, there is *ipso facto* a finite and perishable nature which cannot survive the crisis of death, there is also in them a principle which is altogether independent of the accidents of their mortal part. Hence the individual who is capable of moral and intellectual activity—who, in spite of the narrow conditions of mortal life, can become a 'spectator of all time and existence,' and who, in his practical efforts, is guided by a consciousness, or at least a foretaste and prophetic anticipation, of the universal good—such an individual is essentially self-determined. He has in him a universal principle of activity or life, and nothing can be imposed upon him from without which is not accepted from within. In this way Plato could maintain the originality and independence of every spiritual being, as such, even in his lowest degradation—even when, in his subjection to sense and appetite, he sinks below humanity: for in all its transmigrations the soul is conceived as remaining one with itself. There is, indeed, always a

certain mythic element in Plato's statement of this view; and we are not able to say how far he means what he says of the pre-natal and the future states to be taken literally. But there cannot be any reasonable doubt that he attributes a self-determined and therefore immortal existence to the soul—or, perhaps we should rather say, to the reason or spirit; for, in his later and more definite statements, the soul is taken as the principle that connects the pure reason with the mortal body; and it is only to the spiritual part of man's being that the attribute of immortality is assigned.

It is obvious, however, that Plato could not stop at this point. As he could not rest in the thought of a multiplicity of ideas without referring them back to the one Idea of Good, so neither could he be content with the conception of a multitude of self-determined and immortal souls without referring back to one divine reason, as the source and end of their spiritual life. Hence in the *Philebus* we find him speaking of a "divine intelligence," which is the ultimate cause of all order and organisation in the mixed and imperfect nature of man and of his world. And the same thought is expressed in the mythical language of the *Timaeus*, where Plato declares that the souls of the gods and the higher element in the souls of men are the direct work of the Creator: they are, therefore,

incapable of being destroyed except by him who has created them, and he cannot will to destroy what he has himself made.[1] Thus, in place of a number of independent spiritual beings, each immortal in his own right, we have the idea of a kingdom of spirits, who all, indeed, partake in the divine nature, and are therefore raised above time and change, but who, nevertheless, have a dependent and derived existence and are immortal only through their relation to God. It is in accordance with this that in the *Laws*, where Plato repeats the argument of the *Phaedrus* that the soul is immortal, because it is self-determined, he applies it only to the divine Being. God only is the first mover, the source of life and activity in all other beings. He is the sovereign will, who has ordered the world as an organic whole in which each individual has the exact part to play for which he is fitted.[2] If man be immortal it is not in his own right as an individual, but because the divine life is communicated to him. In other words, we have to prove his immortality on the ground that the universal principle of reason, which is the presupposition of all being and of all knowledge, is the principle of his own life; and that all beings, in whom this principle is realised, must have this nature manifested in them. We must prove it, in short, because in the language of

[1] *Tim.*, 41 A: cf. *Leges*, 904 A. [2] *Leges*, 903 B.

the New Testament "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." And perhaps this is the one argument for immortality, to which much weight can be attached.

It appears, then, that Plato's proof of the immortality of the soul ultimately resolves itself into the ontological argument for the being of God; or rather, we should say, that it is what that argument becomes when freed from its dualistic presuppositions. In other words, it is a regressive argument, which carries us back to an ultimate unity, prior to all difference, and especially to the difference of thought and being. Further, Plato maintains that this unity must be conceived as a supreme intelligence, which, as such, stands in a peculiar relation to all beings who have the principle of intelligence in them. These, and these alone, are regarded as partaking in the divine life, and, therefore, as lifted above change and death. All other things are, in comparison with them, only appearances, which are continually changing and passing away to make room for others. But they—though for a time they become denizens of this world of birth and death, of growth and decay, and may pass through many transitory forms in the rise and fall of their spiritual life—do not essentially belong to it, and their real nature cannot manifest itself clearly until they are liberated from it.

Plato, then, though in his later dialogues he gets beyond the abstract antagonism between the ideal and the sensible worlds, ends by restating that antagonism in a new form. He has shown that ideas are not to be conceived as excluding all difference and relativity, but as elements in an intelligible world, each of which has its distinct character, while yet it is essentially bound up with all the rest. In the second place, he has turned this idealism into a spiritualism by treating soul or intelligence as the only thing that can be regarded as active or self-determined, the only thing that can be taken as actual or real in the full sense of the word. Finally, he has suggested that all souls are to be viewed as derived from, or dependent on, one divine soul or spirit, who manifests himself in and to them, so that, in the words of Schiller,

> "Aus dem Kelch des Seelen-reichs
> Schaümt ihm seine Unendlichkeit."

But this ideal or spiritual world, which is in perfect unity with itself through all its difference, is still conceived as standing in sharp antithesis to the world of phenomenal appearance, in which difference becomes conflict, and conflict produces endless mutation of birth and death. And the last problem of the Platonic philosophy or theology is to determine the relation of these two worlds to each other.

LECTURE NINTH.

THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE PLATONIC PHILOSOPHY.

In the last two lectures I attempted to show the nature of the transition by which Plato passes from the general doctrine that the idea or universal is the real, to the doctrine that the ultimate reality is to be found in mind. Absolute Being, 'that which *is* in the highest sense of the word,' must be a principle which transcends the opposition, maintained by the earlier schools, between being and becoming, between the one and the many; and which also transcends the new opposition, which was brought into view by Socrates, between the subject and the object. It cannot be conceived as rest without motion, as permanence without activity; but as little can it be conceived as an objective ideal principle without consciousness or intelligence; or, on the other hand, as a mere subjective thought or state of consciousness without objective reality. If it is intelligence, it is not intelligence as separated by

abstraction from the intelligible world, but as presupposing and including it. It is 'divine reason,' as the ultimate unity of all the ideas of things, and so as the principle at once of knowing and of being.

But this involves another transition. If mind be the principle of the universe, we cannot contemplate all the parts of the universe as equally far from it and equally near to it. There are ideal principles in all things, but the principle of life and consciousness raises the beings that partake in it above other beings or things; for all soul is divine and "has the care of all inanimate or soulless being, and traverses the whole universe,"[1] taking one form at one time and another at another. Every soul, as such, is a self-determining being, whose life cannot be overpowered or destroyed by anything external to itself. It is thus immortal, and above the power of death and time. And if, in any sense, it be made subject to them, it must be by its own act.

This at once brings us to a problem which greatly exercised the mind of Plato in the latest period of his life, as is shown by the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus*, the problem of the relation of the ideal to the phenomenal world. In one way this problem had now become much more complex and difficult for him; for he could no longer be

[1] *Phaedrus*, 246 B.

content, if he ever were content, with the broad contrast between the permanent and the changing, the one and the many, seeing that he had recognised that the ideal world contains both these elements. The supreme principle could not now be conceived, if it ever were conceived, as an abstract unity resting in itself; it is now definitely recognised as the keystone of a system, and as one with itself in all the ideas which it binds into a whole. It is a conscious and active principle, whose activity manifests itself in every element and part of the universe. It "lives through all life, extends through all extent, spreads undivided, operates unspent"; but in a higher sense it reveals itself only in the individual souls who partake in its immortality.

But, though in this way the ideal world appears to take up into itself all the characteristics by which the phenomenal world was at first distinguished from it, Plato does not give up the fundamental contrast of the two. The multiplicity and movement that belong to the ideal world have still to be distinguished from the multiplicity and movement which are found in the world of genesis and change, the world of space and time. When we pass to the phenomenal, that transparent unity with itself through all its differences which belongs to the pure intelligence, is obscured and disturbed, and its resting identity with itself in

all its activities is broken up and lost in opposition and contradiction. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." Thus, in spite of the progress which Plato made towards a thorough-going idealism, in which the abstract antagonisms of earlier philosophy were overcome, he was never able to escape from the dualism implied in his original contrast of science and opinion.

We might perhaps regard this as due in part to a mistaken view of the abstraction which is necessary for science. Every science selects some aspect or sphere of reality, and isolates it from all other spheres or aspects of it, in order that it may thoroughly elucidate that which it has chosen as the object of its investigation. Every science thus rejects an immense variety of detail with which its peculiar object is surrounded, as being for it accidental and irrelevant. And, though what is irrelevant and accidental for one science may not be so for another, yet, however far we go in this direction, there seems to be much in objects and in their coexistences and successions, which cannot be explained by any science. Further, even if philosophy can grasp some Idea of Good—some principle which unites all the sciences, because it transcends their limited points of view—yet it must always be impossible for us to trace the operation of this principle in the endless detail of changing phenomena which make up our daily life. The utmost knowledge

we can attain still leaves the ordinary course of the world for us a mass of contingencies, of accidental juxtapositions and successions, of which we can only say that it is, and not why it is, still less that it is for the best.[1] Hence our philosophy is too apt to become an effort to find our way to an ideal world in which we may take refuge from the confusions of the world of sense, even though we may acknowledge in words that it is this ideal world that gives to the world of sense all the order, significance, and reality which it possesses. Now, it is just here that Plato seems to take up his position, recognising what we may call the ideal kernel of existence, which gives to this world all the intelligible reality it possesses, but unable to see that in any sense or from any point of view it can be regarded as a pure manifestation of the ideal. Hence his optimism, in the strict sense of the word, is reserved for this ideal kernel, and in regard to everything else he is forced to lower his tone, and to declare that it is not the best but only as good as it can

[1] In the *Philebus* (16 D) Plato urges that in the descent from the unity of the idea to the multiplicity of phenomena, we should endeavour to carry division by intelligible principles as far as possible, subdividing till "the unity with which we began is seen not only to be one and many and infinite, but also a definite number; the infinite must not be suffered to approach the many until the entire number of the species intermediate between unity and infinity has been discovered—then, and not till then, we may rest from division, and without further troubling ourselves about the endless individuals, may allow them to drop into infinity."

possibly be in a phenomenal world; since in that world the ideal is present only as reflected upon the sensible, as a "likeness of good things, but not the perfect image of those things." Hence also there is in Plato a strange fluctuation, both of thought and feeling, in regard to the phenomenal world. Sometimes it is almost exalted to the ideal from which it is derived, and sometimes it is contemned as a phantom world of shadows which hardly redeems itself from non-existence. The phenomenal world for Plato is so far real and divine, as it is a reflexion of the divine intelligence; but it is undivine and unreal, because it is *only* a reflexion of it.

It is in the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus* that this view of the universe gets its fullest expression. In the former of these dialogues, Plato contrasts the divine intelligence which is one with itself in all its action, and so raised above all change and conflict, above all pleasure and pain, with the complex world of genesis and decay, of formation and dissolution, where a principle of order, which is derived from the divine intelligence, has to maintain itself in an element of chaos, and more or less successfully to reduce it to a cosmos. All finite existences, even finite spirits, are a kind of compromise between what Plato calls the limit and the unlimited, between a law which would regulate all things and confine them within definite bounds, and a vague indeterminate material or basis of phenomenal

existence, which has no law in itself, and therefore must receive its determination from without. And, as that which is determined from without can never be perfectly determined, so this material[1] is ever ready to escape from the limitations to which it is subjected, and to return to the lawlessness from which it has been redeemed. If it could exist by itself, it would swing unchecked from excess to defect, from defect to excess, and the 'golden mean' could only partially and for the time be established in it. It is like the marble of the sculptor, which always has some flaw or imperfection in it that makes it a less than perfect embodiment of his idea; or like the forces of nature, which can be subjected to man's design, but have no direct affinity with the purpose they are made to serve and never exactly conform themselves to it. This disconformity shows itself in the continual passing away of everything finite, in the defects that attach to all natural existences, above all in the continual division and conflict of human life. In man this contrast of the material with the ideal which realises itself in it, appears as the opposition of mind and sense, of the intelligence that apprehends and seeks the good with the impulses which, left to themselves, tend to any object that promises pleasure without asking whether, or how far, the good is realised in it.

[1] I use this word as a convenient expression, though it suggests something more definite and substantial than Plato's ἄπειρον.

The ideal of man's life is that it should exhibit in itself "an immaterial principle of order maintaining a noble sovereignty over a living body";[1] and this involves not only the subordination of the natural to the spiritual, but also the most perfect order and gradation of all spiritual aims, and the restriction of enjoyment to pleasures that are simple and pure—pleasures that accompany the highest activities of the soul and do not disturb them. But such an ideal can never be completely realised in the 'mingled' and divided nature of man.

The same contrast is expressed in another way in the *Timaeus*, where Plato gets over some of its difficulties by adopting a mythic form of expression. "We must first," he declares, "make a distinction of the two great forms of being and ask: What is that which is and has no becoming, and what is that which is always becoming and never is? The former, which is apprehended by reason and reflexion, is changeless and ever one with itself; the latter, which is apprehended by opinion through irrational sensation, is ever coming into being and perishing, but never really is. Now, everything that begins to be, must be brought into being by some cause; for without a cause it is impossible for anything to be originated. But whatever things have been produced by the Creator, moulding the form and character of his work after the

[1] *Philebus*, 64 B.

pattern of that which is ever the same, are of necessity beautiful; while those things which he has produced after the pattern of that which has come to be—a pattern which is itself not original but created—cannot be beautiful. Now as to the whole sphere of heaven, the ordered universe, or whatever we please to call it, our first enquiry in this as in every other subject must be, whether it always existed and had no birth or origination from anything else than itself, or whether it came into being and had a beginning in something else. It did begin to be, I reply; for it is visible and tangible, and it has a material body; and of all such sensible things, which are apprehended by opinion with the aid of sense, we must say that they are in process of becoming and are the results of such a process; hence we must needs say that it had a cause."

"Now the Maker and Father of this universe is hard to find, and even if we had found him it would be impossible to reveal him to all men. There is, however, an enquiry which we may make regarding him, to wit, which of the patterns he had in view when he fashioned the universe,—the pattern of the unchangeable, or of that which has come to be. If the world indeed be beautiful and its artificer good, it is manifest that he must have had in view the eternal as his model and pattern; but if the reverse be true, which cannot be said without

blasphemy, then he had in view the pattern which has come to be. Now anyone can see that he looked to the eternal as his pattern; for the world is the most beautiful of creatures, and he is the best of causes. Having, then, come into being in this way, we may say that it has been created in the image of that which is apprehended only by reason and intelligence, and which eternally is. The universe, then, it appears, is a copy and not an original."

"Now in every discussion it is most important to make a beginning which agrees with the nature of the subject of which we treat. Hence in speaking of a copy and its original, we must see that our words are kindred to the matter which they have to express. When they relate to the abiding and unchangeable reality which is apprehended by reason, they must be fixed and unchanging, and, in so far as it is possible for words to be so, they must be incapable of refutation or alteration. But when they relate to that which is an image, though made in the likeness of the eternal, they need only have likelihood and make such an approach to exactness as the case admits; for truth stands to belief as being to becoming. If, then, amid the many opinions about the gods and the generation of the universe, we are not able in every respect to render all our ideas consistent with each other and precisely accurate, no one need be surprised. Enough, if we are able to give an account

which is no less likely than another; for we must remember that I who speak, and you who judge of what I say, are mortal men, so that on these subjects we should be satisfied with a likely story, and demand nothing more."[1]

In this passage Plato makes a broad division between the eternal reality of things and the world of becoming and change, and a corresponding division between the faculties of the soul by which they are severally apprehended, the former being the object of the pure intelligence and of knowledge, the latter of opinion, or, in other words, of a judgment directly based on sense. And it is to be noticed that by this he does not mean merely that opinion is a kind of knowledge which is imperfect by reason of the weakness of our minds. He means that this imperfection lies in the nature of the case; for no changing finite existence can be the object of the pure intelligence, which always contemplates that which absolutely is. The phenomenal world can be pictured by the imagination but, strictly speaking, it can never be understood. It is seen under the form of time which is the moving image of eternity and breaks up the eternal 'now' into past, present, and future. The 'is,' which is the only tense of science, loses its highest sense in the dubious region of phenomena which are continually

[1] *Timaeus*, 27 E *seq.*

changing. It is true that there is something like the unity and permanence of absolute being in the recurrent movement of the heavenly bodies, which, passing through long cycles of change, are supposed ever to return again to their original order and to resume their courses. And in another way we have the same return of the time-process upon itself in the course of animal life, which, as Plato says, imitates eternity by the continual reproduction of the species in new individuals, who go through the same cycle of change.[1] In this world of generation and decay, however, we find no substantial existence, no permanent reality that ever remains one with itself: for, even if we go down to the four original elements, we find them also changing into one another. Nothing, therefore, that we know or experience in this world, seems to have a substantive reality of its own, or to be more than, so to speak, an adjective or passing phase of existence. And, if we ask what is the substance of which such adjectives are predicated, we are obliged to say that it is a thing of which in itself and apart from these adjectives, we can say nothing.

"Suppose an artificer who has given all sorts of shapes to a piece of gold, to be incessantly remoulding it, substituting one shape for another; and suppose somebody to be pointing to one of them, and to ask

[1] *Symposium*, 207 D.

what it is: the safest answer that could be made would be, that it was gold; but as to the triangles and other shapes the gold had taken, it would be best not to speak of these shapes as if they really existed, seeing that they change even while we are making the assertion. . . . Now the same argument applies to the universal nature that receives all bodies. It must be always regarded as the same, as it never departs from its own nature. For, while receiving all indiscriminately, it never itself assumes a form like any of those things that enter into it. It, indeed, is the original recipient of all impressions, and is moved and transformed by them, and appears different from time to time by reason of them: but the things that go in and out, are but imitations of realities, modelled after their image in a way hard to explain, which we shall discuss hereafter."[1]

Plato then goes on to say that this receptive nature, being itself formless though it receives all forms, is hard to define, but that the admission of its reality is forced upon us by the necessity of providing a substratum in which the change to which all things are subjected may take place; and that in spite of the fact that its changes are so complete that they seem to leave nothing at all behind which can be regarded as constituting such a substratum. And

[1] *Tim.*, 50 A *seq.*

he sums up his whole doctrine as to the real, the phenomenal, and its basis or substratum in the following passage which contains in it the germs of much later speculation. "We must agree that there is one kind of being which is always the same, uncreated and indestructible, never receiving anything into itself from without, nor itself going out to any other, but invisible and imperceptible by sense, and of which the perception is granted to intelligence alone. And there is another kind of being which bears the same name with this and is similar to it, a created being which is always in motion, coming to be in a certain place and again perishing out of it, and which is apprehended by sense and opinion. And there is a third kind of being, namely, space, which is eternal and indestructible but provides a seat for all the changeful forms of existence, and which is apprehended without the aid of sense by a kind of spurious reason and is hard to believe in. Looking to this *tertium quid* as in a kind of dream, we say of all existence that it must be somewhere and occupy a space, and that that which has no place either in earth or in heaven, cannot be anything at all. And such is the power of this dream of ours that it makes us unable when we wake to realise the truth, to wit, that an image, or reflexion—seeing that by its essential nature and function, it has no basis in itself but is the flitting shadow of something

else—must have something else than itself, in which it is and by means of which it lays hold upon existence: otherwise it will be reduced to nothing at all. On the other hand, in order to vindicate the reality of the real we must call in the aid of the following accurate rule of reason, namely, that if there be anything which has two different constituents, it is impossible that one of these constituents should inhere in the other in such a way that they shall form a self-identical unity in spite of their difference." [1]

The train of thought here is a little difficult to follow. In the first place, Plato maintains that that which changes, as such, cannot be absolutely real, cannot have that permanent reality which science seeks to grasp. And as this change extends to all the qualities which we recognise in the phenomenal object, we are driven, in seeking for permanent reality, to look beneath the qualities for something which is equally receptive of them all. This common basis is then taken as the quasi-substance of things sensible, while yet, as absolutely indeterminate, it is not a proper substance at all. To Plato a true substance must be a perfectly definite and determined object of knowledge, and, in

[1] *Tim.*, 52 A *seq.* Plato means that the phenomenal, as a combination of an image with that which is its substratum, has not unity with itself, and therefore cannot be regarded as a substantial reality.

this point of view, the qualitative states through which the substratum passes are more like substances than the supposed substratum itself; yet they cannot be taken as substances, because they change and pass away. Such, then, is the strange puzzle of phenomenal existence. We know it under distinct predicates which are definable, but which in it are continually changing; and on the other hand, the substance, to which we seem obliged to refer these predicates, turns out to have no intelligible character. It is something which we are driven to assert as real by what Plato calls a "spurious and illegitimate reasoning," that is, by the argument that, as every particular kind of existence has a material out of which it is formed, so all the forms of existence, as they change into each other, must have a substratum in which the change takes place. Of this substratum, however, we are able to give no account, except that it is the seat of everything else—that to which we refer when we say that everything must be somewhere: in other words, it seems to be one with the condition of being in space, to which all sensible existence is subjected. Yet we are not able to conceive empty space as a substance, in which qualities inhere and changes take place. This riddle of phenomenal existence, however, is partially explained when we recognise that phenomenal existence is essentially an image or reflexion *of* something else

than itself, and that, therefore, we are obliged to think of it as a reflexion *in* something else than itself. Thus the image in one way looks to the ideal reality as its substance, and in another way to that in which it has, so to speak, its local habitation. It is characteristic of the phenomenal that it can be presented to us only through this curious combination of metaphor and analogical inference, but no such ambiguous nature could possibly belong to that which is real in the full sense of the word.

But we cannot leave the matter at this point. If Plato be right in saying that we fall into an illegitimate way of thinking when we attribute independent substance to the phenomenal, he cannot be right in saying that such a way of thinking is necessary. He is, in fact, attempting to find a way between the two horns of a dilemma. He is trying to conceive the ideal as manifesting itself in the phenomenal, and yet at the same time, as having an absolute reality which is complete in itself without any manifestation. Conversely, he would like to treat the phenomenal as if it were nothing at all, or at least a 'mere appearance' which adds nothing to the ideal reality. Yet he cannot deny that even an appearance or image has a kind of reality of its own, and that it needs to be accounted for. Hence, when he abandoned the simple method of Parmenides, who denied that phenomena have any reality at all, he

was obliged to treat them as an illegitimate kind of substances—which yet are no true substances, because they do not belong to the ideal or intelligible world. The only possible escape from this logical *impasse*, would have been to set aside altogether the abstract opposition of the ideal world and the world in space and time, and to substitute for it the conception that they are correlative factors in the one real world. If Plato had adopted this course, he would have done justice equally to the distinction and to the unity of these factors; and he would have avoided the opposite dangers of an abstract monism and of an irreconcilable dualism. He would have conceived the intelligible reality, or the divine intelligence which is its central principle, not as resting in itself, but as essentially self-revealing; and he would have treated the world in space and time as its necessary manifestation. Are there any traces of such a view in Plato?

Before answering this question, let me first refer to the fact that Plato here identifies the substratum of phenomena with that which attaches spatial conditions to them, so that every one of them must be somewhere. We must remember, however, that this, whatever it is, has already been represented by Plato as also attaching temporal conditions to them; so that every one of them must be in a 'now,' which is only a state of transition from what it was to what it will

be.[1] Plato's thought, then, seems to be that the world in space and time is a sort of disrupted and distorted image of the intelligible world, in which the organic unity and eternal self-consistency of the ideal loses itself in dissonance and change. For, as reflected into space, the pure unity of ideas with each other through all their differences, is exchanged for the combination of parts which are external to each other and without unity in themselves; and, as reflected into time, the ideal movement of the intelligence, which remains one with itself in all its activity because it grasps its whole system in every idea, is turned into the vicissitude of an external sequence in which one thing is continually passing away to make room for another. With this Plato combines the further conception, that that which is essentially self-external, as in space, and essentially in flux, as in time, must be

[1] It would involve a long discussion to explain all that Plato says on this subject. We may agree with Baümker (*Problem der Materie in der Griech. Phil.*, p. 184 *seq.*) that Plato is led by Pythagorean influence to identify matter with space, and that, consequently, he gives a purely mathematical explanation of the four elements as figures formed by the combination of planes. But it is to be noted that Plato immediately proceeds to speak of it as the 'nurse of genesis,' and to trace the continual change of sensible things to the inequality of the determination of different parts of space by different figures, which are, therefore, continually conflicting and passing into each other. They are, as it were, shapes which appear for a moment and vanish to make room for others. The idea of externality is thus immediately connected in Plato's mind with the ideas of conflict and of the consequent flux of becoming. And both seem to imply something analogous to the Aristotelian ὕλη.

externally determined in all its changes. Hence the phenomenal is contrasted with the intelligible world, or, what is the same thing, with the intelligence, as that which is moved by another with that which is moved by itself; or, in other words, as that which is under the sway of necessity with that which is self-determined or free.[1] But though primarily and in itself the phenomenal world is the sphere of necessity, even in it Plato holds that actually necessity is subjected to a higher principle, which, however, never completely does away with it. "All these things, constituted as they are by the necessity of nature, the Creator of what is best in the world of becoming took to himself at the time when he was producing the self-sufficing and most perfect God;[2] and while he used the necessary causes as his ministers in the accomplishment of his work, it was by his own art that he realised the good in all the creation. Wherefore we must distinguish two kinds of causes, the necessary and the divine; and, so far as our nature admits, we must make the divine in

[1] It is to be observed that Plato views that which is moved by another as entirely passive, and that he has no idea of any reaction involved in the transmission of motion. The abstract contrast of that which is self-moved with that which is moved by another, *i.e.* pure activity with pure passivity, is what makes the union of mind and body so accidental and external with Plato.

[2] *Tim.*, 68 E *seq.* The universe as an organic whole, as we shall see in the sequel, is conceived by Plato as a 'second God,' who is as like as possible to the first.

all cases our end and aim; but we must seek the necessary causes for the sake of the divine, considering that, without them and isolated from them, it is impossible for us to know or attain or in any way share in those highest things which are the objects we really desire."

Reason, in short, realises its designs in the world only so far as necessity will permit; it rules, in Plato's metaphor, by 'persuading necessity'; and necessity can never be completely persuaded. Hence, in our enquiry into the nature of the world, as Plato had already pointed out in the *Phaedo*, we have to study both the causes of things, *i.e.* both the ends realised in them, and the conditions *sine quibus non*, imposed upon their realisation by the material in which they are realised. But we can never bring these two together, or conceive the necessity of nature as anything more than an external and partly recalcitrant means whereby the purposes of reason have to be realised.

We end, therefore, with a conception of the phenomenal world as the resultant of two kinds of causation, which cannot be brought to a unity; for we cannot in any way bridge over the gulf between the *actus purus* of reason and the mere passivity of corporeal existence, which is supposed to be able to receive and transmit motion or action, but not to originate it. The only way, therefore, in which the

two can be united is by the external subjection of the one to the other; and this subjection, just because it is external, can never be complete; for, where the means are not inherently related to the end, the end can never be perfectly achieved. It does not occur to Plato to ask whether either of the abstractions between which he has divided the world—the abstraction of pure activity or the abstraction of pure passivity—is intelligible by itself, or can be regarded as representing any reality. On the contrary, he treats the former as that which alone is absolutely real and intelligible; and his only problem is to explain how the latter can exist, or be thought at all. This problem he seeks to solve by the externality or spatial character of all corporeal existences; for, as realised in space, the ideal forms are torn asunder from each other and even from themselves, and their difference shows itself as disharmony and conflict. And, finally, when he has to meet the difficulty of conceiving extension or space as a substance, he finds his escape in the conception that the phenomenal world is a world of images which, as such, cannot be made intelligible and cannot therefore be regarded as absolutely real, yet which cannot be denied all reality. This baffling ambiguity of nature withdraws it from the cognisance of science, and assigns it to the sphere of opinion. On the other hand, it is the nature of the ideal reality of things

to be transparently one with itself in all its difference; as it is the nature of the pure intelligence to comprehend such reality, apart from all the confusions of the appearance. We are left, therefore, with a dualism which is at once subjective and objective; nor is it anywhere admitted that there is a principle which can dissolve the contradiction and reduce the two worlds to one.

Yet, while we say this, we must at the same time notice that Plato does supply us with a suggestion which might have removed this difficulty, if only he had fully developed its consequences. For, after all, Plato does not accept the doctrine that the relation of the real to the phenomenal is an altogether external or accidental relation. On the contrary, he not only refers the phenomenal to the ideal, as its cause, but he finds in the latter a kind of necessity for the former.

In the first place, let us look at what he says of the reason for the existence of the world. "Let me tell you why nature and this universe of things was framed by him who framed it. God is good; and in a perfectly good being no envy or jealousy could ever exist in any case or at any time. Being thus far removed from any such feeling, he desired that all things should be as like himself as it was possible for them to be. This is the sovereign cause of the existence of the world of change, which we shall do

well to believe on the testimony of wise men of old. God desired that everything should be good and nothing evil, so far as this was attainable. Wherefore, finding the visible world not in a state of rest but moving in an irregular and disorderly fashion, out of disorder he brought order, thinking that in every way this was better than the other. Now it is impossible that the best of beings should ever produce any but the most beautiful of works. The Creator, therefore, took thought and discerned that out of the things that are by nature visible, no work, destitute of reason, could be made, which would be so fair as one that possessed reason, setting whole against whole. He saw also that reason could not dwell in anything that is devoid of soul. And because this was his thought, in framing the world he put intelligence in soul, and soul in body, that he might be the maker of the fairest and best of works. Hence, taking the account of things that has most likelihood, we ought to affirm that the universe is a living creature endowed with soul and intelligence by the providence of God."[1]

Even making some allowance for the mythic form of this statement, we can see that Plato finds in the goodness of God the reason for the creation of the world. The ideal reality, which in its ultimate conception is one with the divine intelligence, is

[1] *Tim.*, 29 E *seq.*

not conceived as indifferent to all that is outside of it, but as by the necessity of its nature going beyond itself, and manifesting itself in the universe. Yet, on the other hand, this necessity is conceived as a conditional one, implying the previous existence of something else external to the divine being, something which has no order in itself, and therefore must receive order, must be turned from chaos to cosmos, by the operation of the divine intelligence. And, just because of this, the universe, though the 'best of all possible worlds,' is not conceived as in itself essentially good. It is good so far as the nature of the case admits, or so far as the material to be used is capable of goodness. But this material is in itself formless, and even when it is brought under form, it never is completely subjected thereto. It, therefore, brings division, conflict and change into the life of the created universe; or, putting it in another way, it makes that universe phenomenal and unreal, or real only with the partial reality of an image, which has no substance in itself, but only in that which produces it. Thus, just because the divine intelligence is not conceived as essentially self-manifesting but as manifesting itself only in relation to something given from without, Plato's pregnant conception of the goodness of God loses its meaning, and the phenomenal and the real are again divorced from each other.

We must, however, call attention to a second attempt of Plato to bridge the gulf between the eternal intelligence and the transitory world of sense, namely, by means of the idea of the soul as an intermediate or mediating existence. It is, indeed, quite in the manner of Plato to introduce a middle term between extremes which he is unable directly to unite. Thus the soul itself is described as compounded of the elements of 'the same' and 'the other,' *i.e.* of the self-identical unity of the idea and the unmediated difference of space, which are held together by an *οὐσία*, or essential being that contains both these elements.[1] But such an expedient only raises the same difficulty in a new form. For, if the extremes be absolutely opposed to each other, the middle term that connects them will itself require another middle term to unite its discordant elements. Now, in the present case, the intelligence and the bodily nature are conceived as essentially disparate, and the soul, which partakes of both, cannot be regarded as transcending or reconciling their difference. Hence neither for the connexion of the divine intelligence with the world, nor for the connexion of the intelligence of man with his body, can we find a mediating principle in the soul. And in the soul itself the pure principle of thought breaks away from the powers

[1] *Timaeus*, 35 A.

of sensation and appetite which are connected with the bodily existence; nor is it possible to discover any link of connexion between them, either in the discursive reason, or in those higher desires which are summed up by Plato under the name of *θυμός*.

And this leads to a further result in relation to the question of immortality. For that which is essentially connected with the body must share its fate. But if none of the powers of the soul are to survive the body, in what sense can it be said that man as an individual has any permanent being which is not touched by death? That which abides can only be a pure universal intelligence, without memory or individual consciousness, which can hardly be distinguished from the divine intelligence. Indeed, even the idea of God as an individual Being seems to disappear when he is conceived as a purely contemplative intelligence, who is complete in himself, apart from any manifestation in the world. These results of his dualistic view were not, indeed, realised by Plato, but they begin to show themselves in the metaphysic of Aristotle. Meanwhile they were held in check by other tendencies of Plato, and especially, as I have already indicated, by his conception of the goodness of God, as leading to the communication of good to all his creatures.

Closely connected with the idea of the mediation of the soul, is another doctrine of which we find

considerable traces in the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus*, but which we know mainly through the Aristotelian criticism of it. Aristotle tells us that Plato in his later years laid great emphasis upon the conceptions of number and measure, and, indeed, that he represented the quantitative determinations of things with which mathematical science has to deal as a special kind of existences, which lie midway between the ideal and the sensible, differing from the latter by their generality, and from the former by their multiplicity; for we can have many identical repetitions of the same numbers or figures, but there cannot be two identical ideas. We may suspect that in the statement of this theory Aristotle, with his usual tendency to insist on differences, has fixed and hardened the distinctions of Plato, and thereby given them a somewhat strange and unnatural appearance: but what we actually find in the Platonic dialogues enables us partially to understand what is meant. In most of his works, indeed, Plato does not hesitate to speak of *ideas* of number and quantity; but in the later dialogues we can trace a growing tendency to regard such conceptions, not as ideas, but as conditions of the manifestation of the ideas in the sensible or phenomenal world. Already in the *Republic* the mathematical sciences are referred to the discursive reason, as distinguished from dialectic which is referred to the pure or intuitive intelligence;

though the main difference between them which is distinctly stated is that these sciences do not go back to first principles, but are based upon hypotheses which have only a relative generality.

In the *Philebus,* however, the divine cause of all things, the ideal principle of all reality, is clearly distinguished from what is called 'the limit' (τὸ πέρας); that is, from the measure or quantitative determination, to which in the phenomenal world 'the unlimited' element (τὸ ἄπειρον) is subjected, in order to bring within bounds the endless possibility of increase and diminution which is characteristic of that element. The pure unity of the ideal or intelligible reality, in which the whole is present, in every part—or, what is the same thing in another aspect, the absolute self-identity of the divine intelligence, which is one with itself in all its activity and therefore combines in one the attributes of rest and motion—this pure unity and identity has to manifest itself in the sensible world as a law which determines the quantitative relations of the elements of each particular existence, and the order and extent of its changes. And the same mediating principle of measure can be observed also in the soul of man, in so far as there is an order and harmony of the inner life, which maintains itself in all the endless vicissitudes of states due to its association with the

body. Thus the good of man consists in the due regulation of all the elements of his nature, or, as Plato expresses it, in the "rule of an immaterial order over a living body"; and this is clearly distinguished from the absolute Good, which has in it no distinction of parts, and in which, therefore, there is no need for one part to control another. Thus the pure organic unity of the ideal translates itself in the sensible world into the quantitative proportion of different elements, as determined by laws which maintain themselves, not absolutely but with relative constancy, amid all the difference and change of nature and of the soul of man. This might be otherwise expressed by saying that the good in its manifestation becomes the beautiful; for beauty is dependent on symmetry and proportion.[1]

The same fundamental conception is repeated in the *Timaeus*, where 'the unlimited' of the *Philebus* is identified primarily with space and secondarily with time. In the *Timaeus*, therefore, it is represented that the ideal, as reflected into the dispersion of space and the flux of time, is partly infected by the characteristics of these forms; but it recovers itself in so far as the externality of spatial existence is brought under the unity of definite geometrical figures, and its changes are determined to a definite order of succession. Further, this succession is conceived as

[1] *Philebus*, 64 E.

constantly repeating itself, so that, through a long cycle of movement, everything is brought back again and again to the same point. We are thus able to understand how it was that the mathematical relations became for Plato the expression of the ideal in the sensible, and in what sense Aristotle could justly attribute to him the doctrine that they form a kind of 'intermediates' (τὰ μεταξύ) between the two. But it is manifest that this doctrine fails in the same way as the doctrine of the mediation of the soul; for time and space are simply presupposed or assumed as existing external to the reality and the ideal; nor is there anything in its nature, as Plato has described it, which can supply a rationale for its being reflected into space and time, so as to give rise to the phenomenal world. In both cases we see Plato endeavouring to escape from the difficulties of an absolute division by the introduction of a middle term—an expedient which for reasons already given must necessarily fail. For no mediation between two extremes is possible, unless we can find a higher principle which transcends them both and reduces them to different forms or expressions of its own unity.

There is, however, still one other form of expression, by which Plato seeks to escape the difficulties of dualism; and it is one which deserves special attention, because of its influence upon Christian

theology. The phenomenal world—which, as we have seen, is conceived by Plato as a living being with a soul and a body—is represented in the *Timaeus* not only as the image or reflexion of the intelligible world, but also as a 'second god.' Thus, though it has only a derived existence, it is regarded as possessing a relative completeness and self-sufficiency, which entitle it to be called divine, in contrast with all other creatures which draw from it their being and well-being. Furthermore, this 'second god' is called the 'son' and even the 'only-begotten son' of the first God. This idea is expressed in the concluding words of the *Timaeus*: "All our discourse about the nature of the universe hath here an end. Having received all living beings, mortal and immortal, into itself and being therewith replenished, this world has come into existence in the manner explained above, as a living being which is itself visible and embraces all beings that are visible. It is, therefore, an image of its maker, a god manifested to sense, the greatest and best, the most beautiful and perfect of all creatures, even the one and only-begotten universe." With this idea of the sonship of the phenomenal universe—which is conceived as a living and conscious individual embracing all other creatures in itself—Plato seems almost to cross the border that separates the dualistic philosophy of Greece from the peculiar doctrines of Christianity. But,

after all, it remains with him simply a strong metaphor, conveying indeed the idea of the nearness of the derivative to its original, but still excluding the thought of any unity that really transcends the difference. All we can say is, that the ambiguous nature of the phenomenal world makes Plato at one time exalt it almost to the ideal, and at another time set it in almost absolute opposition thereto; and that here, in his final utterances, we find him dwelling more on the positive than on the negative aspect of the relation.[1]

We seem, then, in the *Timaeus*, which may be regarded as the last word of Plato's theology, to be brought to a somewhat ambiguous conclusion, a sort of open verdict, which may be interpreted in two opposite ways according as we emphasise one or the other of the aspects of his thought. On the one hand, if we lay stress upon Plato's synthesis of

[1] I have not said anything of the two souls, the good and the evil soul, of which Plato speaks in the *Laws* (896 E), as principles to which the origin of things is to be referred. The idea of an evil soul is directly excluded by the *Politicus* (270 A), and it is difficult to see how Plato's principles could possibly admit of it. We may explain the admission of it by the popular character of the *Laws* or by the tendency to pessimism which was characteristic of its editor. And we may observe that though the hypothesis of two souls is admitted for the moment, no use is made of the idea of the evil soul in the sequel, in which Plato seems to refer the whole universe to a good principle, and that without suggesting the existence of any opposite principle, like the ἄπειρον of the *Philebus*.

opposites, upon his attempted reconciliation of Parmenides and Heraclitus, upon his conception of mind as a self-moving principle which produces motion in all other things, and lastly, upon his conception of God as a goodness which communicates itself and therefore is the cause of being and well-being to all his creatures, we seem to be brought within sight of an absolute idealism, which transcends all distinctions, even the distinction of the material and the spiritual. On the other hand, if we lay stress upon the sharp contrast which he draws between intelligence and necessity, between that which is the self-moving and self-determined and that which is moved and determined by another, between the unity through all difference and the permanence through all activity which belong to the real or intelligible world, and the self-externality and endless flux which are characteristic of the phenomenal, we shall find in the Platonic writings a scheme of doctrine which is essentially dualistic, and even, as regards the world of sense, pessimistic. It is only if we keep all the threads together that we can understand the loftiness of his idealism, and the way in which he often seems to reject its consequences. Thus he holds that this is the 'best of all possible worlds,' the image of the invisible, the manifestation of the goodness of God, and even that it is a 'second god': yet at the same time he is able to declare,

that "evils can never pass away; for there must needs exist something which stands opposed to the good. They have no seat among the gods, but of necessity they cling to the nature of mortal creatures, and haunt the region in which we dwell."[1] In like manner, Plato's absolute confidence in philosophy as the supreme gift of God to man, does not preclude an almost agnostic tone in many places of his writing, as when he declares that "the Father and Maker of this universe is hard to find out," and that even if we could find him, it would not be possible to communicate what we know to other men. We know God, Plato seems to say, through the world which is his reflexion; but it is a world of genesis and decay in which the divine can only be imperfectly adumbrated; and we ourselves, though rational and so partakers of the divine nature, are in another aspect of our being only fragmentary and imperfect existences—parts of the partial world, who can never completely gather into their minds the meaning of the whole. "It is hard to exhibit except by analogies, any of the things that are most important: for each of us seems to know everything as in a dream, and, again, in waking reality to know nothing at all."[2] This strange alternation between the consciousness of absolute knowledge as his portion, and the sense that what he

[1] *Theaet.* 176 A. [2] *Politicus*, 277 D.

knows is only a foretaste of something greater, is, however, not such a paradox as it seems. As the religious man says: "I believe, help thou mine unbelief," so the great idealistic philosopher feels it no contradiction to say: "I know," while yet he can hardly find expressions strong enough to characterise his ignorance. He knows, we might say, simply because he can, like Socrates, measure his ignorance. He has an idea of the whole, as an outline which he cannot fill up, though his whole life is a progress in filling it, and the goal he seeks is assured to him from the beginning. As man and as philosopher, Plato is conscious that he is born to be "a spectator of all time and existence," and he never thinks of the highest reality as inaccessible to the intelligence. It is, as I have shown, an extreme misunderstanding of the words which he uses about the Idea of Good when the Neo-Platonists attribute to him the notion of an absolute unity, in which all distinction is lost, and which therefore cannot be apprehended except in an ecstasy in which thought and consciousness are annihilated. On the contrary, it is his fundamental thought that that which is most real is most knowable, and that which is most knowable is most real.[1] It is not, therefore, in the silence and passivity of the spirit, but in its highest and most perfect activity, that it comes

[1] *Rep.*, 477 A.

nearest to the divine; and it is only because this activity is obstructed and weakened by our mortal nature, that we do not know God fully and as he is.

There has been much discussion among theologians about the immanency or transcendency of God, but it is not quite easy to determine what is meant by these words. If by the transcendency of God be meant that there is in the principle of the intelligible world something not intelligible, we cannot speak of it without contradicting ourselves. The assertion of such transcendency is an attempt to reach a highest superlative, an attempt which overleaps itself, and ends by saying nothing at all. God is a word that has no significance, unless by it we mean to express the idea of a Being who is the principle of unity presupposed in all the differences of things, and in all our divided consciousness of them. In this sense, then, we must think of God as essentially immanent in the world and accessible to our minds. But from another point of view, the principle of unity in the world must necessarily transcend the whole of which it is the principle; and every attempt to explicate this principle into a system of the universe, made by those who are themselves parts of that system, must be in many ways inadequate. The microcosm can apprehend, but cannot fully comprehend, the macrocosm. In trying to realise the unity of the whole we seem only to advance from part to part,

from finite to finite, so that "the margin fades for ever and for ever as we move." The articulation of knowledge always lacks something which the self-involved religious sentiment seems to possess; though on the other hand, that sentiment, if it be not continually explicating itself, soon becomes abstract and empty. For a unity that does not go out into diversity, and cannot therefore return upon itself from it, is no real unity. Thus religion, in one aspect of it, is apt to become opposed to science and also to practical morality, as a contemplative consciousness that is beyond all the discourse of reason and all the deliberative action of the practical understanding. And even philosophy seems to be an enemy to religion, because, in spite of its striving after unity, it is obliged in the first instance to proceed by analysis, to work out every difference to its utmost consequences, and only to return to unity of principle through the reconciliation of opposites. Further, as this return is always being made, but never is made finally, conclusively and once for all; so there always seems to be a gap between the effort to recognise and realise God in the world, and the religious intuition of piety which takes that recognition and realisation as complete. And that gap may be supposed to imply, on the one side, the transcendency of God, and, on the other, the failure of the intelligible universe to realise, and of our intelligence to under-

stand Him. Thus an imperfect consideration of the relation of different aspects of the truth may seem to drive us to the alternatives of mysticism or dualism. It is the great achievement of Plato that he makes us clearly see both horns of the dilemma, as it is his failure that he is not able to discover any quite satisfactory way of escape from it. Hence he could not attain to that end after which he was constantly striving, a complete reconciliation of the opposite lines of thought which meet in his philosophy. I think, however, that it will be evident even from the sketch of his philosophical theology I have given, that he did more than anyone before or since to open up all the questions with which the philosophy of religion has to deal.

LECTURE TENTH.

THE TRANSITION FROM PLATO TO ARISTOTLE.

THE saying that "every one is born a Platonist or an Aristotelian" can be taken as true, if at all, only in a very general sense. It can only mean that men are roughly divided into two classes, those whose prevailing tendency is toward synthesis and those whose prevailing tendency is toward analysis; those who seek to discover unity among things that present themselves as diverse and unconnected, and those who seek rather to detect differences in things that present themselves as similar or even identical. But it is obvious that these two characteristics can never be entirely isolated from each other. Distinction implies relation, and relation distinction; and he who sees clearly the one cannot be altogether blind to the other. Least of all can we admit such blindness in the case of two great systematic writers, like Plato and Aristotle, who may be admitted to have a certain bias of mind, but who cannot be conceived

as one-sided dogmatists or men of one idea. Aristotle's philosophy, indeed, is not the contradictory, but rather the opposite counterpart, of that of Plato; and though the former may be disposed to dwell with greater emphasis on the points that separate him from his master than on those which they hold in common, yet it may safely be asserted that there are no two philosophers who are so closely akin in the general scheme of their thought. Thus—to name only the points that are of greatest importance—they are in thorough agreement in maintaining an idealistic or spiritualistic view of the ultimate principle of thought and reality; and they agree also in holding that, in the world of our immediate experience, this principle realises itself under conditions which are not in harmony with it, and which in some degree disguise and obstruct the manifestation of its true nature. But, while they thus coincide in the ultimate results of their philosophy, they start from opposite points of view, and their general agreement is apt to be hidden from us by continual collisions on almost every secondary question.

We may, then, describe Aristotle's general relation to Plato in the following way: He is the most faithful of Plato's disciples, a disciple who developed his master's doctrine to a more distinct and definite result, and who gave it a more systematic form; and he is, at the same time, the severest of Plato's

critics, one who saw into all the weak places of his teaching, and pressed home every objection against it with unsparing logic. Sometimes he is carried so far in his polemic that he becomes as one-sided as the philosopher he attacks, only in an opposite direction. At other times the antagonism between them is rather one of words than of essential meaning, and we seem to find the true interpretation of Plato rather in Aristotle's own view than in that which he attributes to his master. And not seldom he lays himself open to the same objections which he urges against Plato.

The precise nature of this agreement and difference may be made clearer by a few words of explanation. As I have shown in previous lectures, the general tendency of Plato is to generalise and to unify, to refer each sphere of phenomenal existence to some idea which he regards as the source of all its reality, and the principle through which alone it can be understood; and, ultimately, to carry back all these ideas to the Good or the divine reason, as the principle of all being and of all thought. His fundamental doctrine is that 'the universal is the real'; and in his earlier dialogues he emphasises this aspect of things so strongly as to give colour to the idea that he seeks truth not *in*, but *beyond*, the many. Hence the Platonic idea has been supposed to be the abstract universal, *i.e.* a common element found in the particulars as these are given in ordinary experience, and not a principle which explains

these particulars, and in doing so transforms our first conception of them. It has, however, been pointed out in the preceding lectures that there is much even in the earlier, and still more in the later dialogues of Plato, to prove that he is no mystic who loses the many in the one, and that, if he regards his ideal principles as transcending the particular phenomena of experience, yet this means—mainly and primarily—that he sets aside all that is irrelevant and accidental in the objects or aspects of objects investigated, in order that he may confine his view to their characteristic and inseparable properties. It has also been pointed out that philosophy, as Plato finally describes it, is as much concerned to resolve the unity of the idea into the multiplicity of its different elements or specific manifestations, as to bring back all its differences to unity. His ultimate aim, therefore is not simply to attain to unity, still less to do so by the omission of difference, but to produce a comprehensive system of thought, in which all the elements are clearly distinguished, yet all are organically connected with each other as members of one whole.

On the other hand, it is obvious that Aristotle's primary tendency is to analyse and distinguish, to resolve his data into their separate elements, and to fix each element by clear definition in its opposition to all the others; and, generally, to account for the whole,

as far as possible, by the parts. He first drew sharp lines of division between the different sciences, insisting that each subject-matter should be dealt with according to its own principle and method. For him, 'the individual is the real,' and general ideas have value only as the explanation of particulars. He seeks the one not beyond, but in the many, not by abstracting from experience, but by the analysis of it. So far, therefore, his language seems to be in direct contradiction to that of Plato, and, indeed, he means us to understand that it is so. But when we look closer, we find that he too is obliged to find room for the Platonic point of view, and to confess that the one is not only in but also beyond the many;[1] in other words, that there are irrelevances and inconsistencies in the immediate judgments of experience, from which we must abstract in order to reach the real nature of its objects; and that science, therefore, cannot explain the many changing particulars without rejecting our first conceptions of them. For science, as Aristotle conceives it, has to become demonstrative; it has to deduce the properties of things from their essential definitions; and this implies that there is much that is irrelevant and accidental in particular substances, as immediately presented in experience, which must be set aside as incapable of being explained by the specific principles realised in them.

[1] *Post. An.*, II, 19.

Finally, if Aristotle seeks to explain things by resolving them into their elements, yet he knows that any real whole is more than the sum of its parts. And, though he seems at first to take the separate sciences and their objects as independent of each other, yet in the end he represents the universe as a teleological whole which finds its principle in the pure nature of mind or self-consciousness, a principle which is realising itself in every rational being and is eternally realised in God.

The truth is that both the principles, expressed in the propositions, 'the universal is the real' and 'the individual is the real,' are ambiguous. Each of them may be taken in a higher and in a lower sense; and while, in the lower sense, they are diametrically opposed to each other, in the higher sense they are only distinguished as complementary aspects of the same truth. That 'the universal is the real' may, as we have seen, be taken to mean that any common quality, in the immediate conception of it, is an independent reality, centred in itself and without relation to any other qualities or to any subject in which they inhere; and this is what is commonly understood by the term realism. Or, on the other hand, it may mean that anything that deserves to be called a substance, or independent reality, must have in it a principle of unity, which may at first be hidden from us, but which, when we discover it, can be seen

to manifest itself in all the different aspects it presents to us. Thus each kind of existence has its specific form which makes it a relatively independent whole, and, again, all these specific forms are finally subordinated to one general form, which gives unity and individuality to the universe. In like manner, the principle that 'the individual is the real,' taken in its lowest sense, will mean that the real lies in the particular thing as the immediate object of sense perception, of which we can say only that it is unique, or that it is a 'this,' which here and now we see and handle, and to which universals must be attached as qualifying predicates. But, on the other hand, it may mean that reality is to be found only in that which has organic or, at least, systematic completeness, in that which is one with itself through all the difference of the elements that enter into its constitution, and which remains one with itself through all the phases of its history. In other words, it may mean that that alone is substantially real which has a self, or something analogous to a self, and which, therefore, in all its various modifications may be said to be at least relatively self-determined.

Now, in the former of these two senses individuality and universality are direct opposites of each other, and to say that the real is both individual and universal, both a 'this' and an abstract quality, would

be absurd—though dialectically it might be shown that abstract universality and abstract individuality easily pass iuto each other. But, in the latter sense, individuality and universality are different aspects of the same thing; for a universal only means a general principle, viewed as expressing itself in different forms or phases, each of which implies all the others and the whole; and an individual is just such a whole or totality, viewed as determined in all its forms or phases by one principle. To put it otherwise, we know any thing or being, only when we discern all the elements that are necessary to it in their distinction and in their relation; and we can recognise it as a real whole or individual substance, only in so far as these distinctions and relations are determined by one idea or principle. In short, it is just the determination of all its properties by one universal principle that makes us separate it from other things and beings as a true individual; and on the other hand, if, and so far as, its character be determined by external or accidental relations to other things, it is imperfectly individualised. This, of course, implies that ultimately there is no existence which is universal and none which is individual in the highest sense of these words, except the universe as a whole, or the divine Being who is its principle. But it also implies that no existence can have individuality even in a relative sense, except in so far as it has universality, that is,

in so far as all its aspects are determined by one idea; and that no existence can have universality, unless it is self-determined and individual.[1]

Now, just in so far as the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle can be taken in this latter sense, there is no real opposition between them; while, if they can only be taken in the former sense, they must be regarded as wholly irreconcileable. The truth may perhaps best be expressed by saying that, to one who takes their first words in their most obvious sense, Plato and Aristotle seem respectively to begin with the abstract universal and the abstract individual, but that in their most developed doctrine they substitute for these what we may call the concrete universal and the concrete individual. This is partly hidden from us by the fact that Aristotle seems often to take Plato in his lowest sense, as many later writers have taken Aristotle in his lowest sense. In his criticisms upon the ideal theory Aristotle very distinctly points out the error of taking the abstract universal as complete in itself, and, therefore, as an independent or individual substance. He shows with convincing logic that the separate sciences of arithmetic, geometry, etc., in dealing with number, extension, quantity, motion, and the like, are concerned with aspects of things which

[1] Aristotle's chief argument against the ideal theory is just that the ideas were at once universal and individual. Cf. *e.g. Met.*, 1086, 10.

may be isolated by abstraction, but which have no independent reality apart from each other, or from the concrete existence in which they are elements.[1] In this he undoubtedly makes a valid criticism upon Plato, in so far as the latter, especially in his earlier works, is apt to speak of particular ideas or universals, as if each of them were complete in itself apart from the rest, and even to take the special sciences built upon such principles as if they dealt with quite independent realities or provinces of reality. But Aristotle himself falls into the same error, though in a less obvious way, when he treats inorganic elements and organic beings—plants, animals and men—as, each and all of them, individual substances in the same sense, without any admission of the partial character of their individuality, or of the fact that there are what Mr. Bradley calls "degrees of reality" among them. Each of them may be characterised as 'this particular thing'; and, therefore, as Aristotle seems to think, each of them may be taken as an independent substance which is only accidentally related to other substances. It is true that he treats each of these substances as having a specific principle realised in it, but he draws a broad line of separation between the properties which belong to it in virtue of this specific principle, and the accidents which come to it from

[1] See especially *Met.*, XIII, 3.

the peculiar character of its matter or from its external relations to other things. Nor does he seem to admit that there is any point of view from which these accidents shall be conceived as themselves the manifestation of a higher necessity. In other words, he does not realise that what, in view of the principle realised in a particular substance, might be regarded as accidental, may be necessary from the point of view of some larger whole, in which it is contained. Yet such isolation of the individual involves exactly the same error as the Platonic isolation of the universal.

And this leads me to point out what may be regarded as the common source of the errors of the Platonic and the Aristotelian philosophies. This is that both Plato and Aristotle start with presuppositions, which they are unable either to explain or to explain away: Plato, with the presupposition of a given multiplicity which he seeks to reduce to unity; Aristotle, with the presupposition of a confused unity or continuity[1] which he is never able distinctly to resolve into its elements or to show to be individually determined in all its parts. The result is that, in both cases, that which is regarded as the ideal of knowledge, and, therefore, as the supreme reality, cannot be recognised as the truth or reality of the world of our immediate

[1] *Phys.*, 184*a*, 21.

experience. In that world, according to Plato, we fail to find the pure manifestation of the universal truth, which yet everything seems to suggest; and when, in our practical endeavours, we seek to realise that universal Good, which is ultimately the object of all our desires, what we attain must always fall short of what we think. In like manner, according to Aristotle, what we require for our intellectual satisfaction is demonstrative system; it is to resolve the world into a multitude of individual substances, each of which is determined in all its properties by one principle; but what we find is a multitude of imperfect specimens of each specific kind, none of which is free from accidental modifications. And, again, in the sphere of practical reason we are met by the same contradiction of the ideal and the actual; for, while it is the chief end of man to realise himself as a rational being, to turn his life into a perfectly ordered whole in which every activity plays its proper part, he has to work out this ideal in the contingent matter of an individual human existence, and under the influence of passions which can never be entirely subjected to reason. Yet on the other hand, that which in this world appears as the ideal which man must seek to find or to produce is, for both Plato and Aristotle, the supreme reality. For Plato, the Idea of Good is the unity of being and knowing, it is the idea which sums up all other

ideas in itself, or it is the intelligence in which all other intelligences are embraced: but, as such, it is essentially separated from the finite world, and from the psychical as well as the corporeal existence of men. In like manner, the divine or absolute Being is for Aristotle a pure self-determined, self-contemplating reason, which can be grasped only by the pure intelligence of man, and can hardly be distinguished therefrom. As such, God is the first mover and the final end of the universe; yet, as we shall see, Aristotle has great difficulty in connecting him with the finite at all, and only succeeds in doing so by a metaphysical *tour de force*. And, as his conception of matter, as the necessary basis of existence in this world of finitude and change, is more positive than Plato's, the ultimate result of his system is even more decidedly dualistic than that of his master.

This last point, however, is a subject of much controversy, and in order to deal with it fairly, it will be necessary to consider Aristotle's main lines of thought in two opposite aspects. I shall endeavour, therefore, to show that Aristotle goes much beyond Plato in the fulness and definiteness with which he works out his idealistic system; and yet that, in doing so, he makes concessions to a dualistic mode of thinking which are greater than anything admitted by Plato.

The advance which Aristotle makes upon Plato lies mainly in two directions. In the first place, his individualistic tendency brings with it a greater respect for immediate experience: it saves him to a great extent from the dangers of a too rapid synthesis, and it keeps alive his curiosity for all the details of existence where no synthesis is yet possible. Aristotle is no mere empiricist; he is well aware that we must go beyond immediate experience to know things as they really are; but he has nothing of that impatience with particular phenomena, and that desire at once to get away from them to general principles, which was the main weakness of Plato. Plato had, indeed, to a certain extent, maintained the rights of opinion, that is, of our immediate empirical consciousness, but Aristotle does much more. He is infinitely patient in exhibiting all the aspects of things as they present themselves to the ordinary consciousness, and all the judgments which they have suggested to the 'plain man,' as well as to the philosopher. His collections of empirical data, especially in biology, ethics, and politics, greatly widen the area of scientific enquiry; and his constant effort to mark out the different spheres of knowledge and to find the principles appropriate to each sphere, exhibits a great advance upon a method of philosophising which brought all things at once within the scope of its grand generalisations. The difficulty with

Aristotle is rather that each science or department of philosophy is treated so independently, and with so little reference to the others, that it is often hard to see how the various researches can be combined into one whole. But the dangers of excessive specialism were yet in the future; and, in the meantime, Aristotle's example gave a great encouragement to thoroughness and completeness of enquiry into different departments of knowledge—an encouragement which was much needed, but which was little appreciated till a later period.

To this formal improvement in the method of science, another of even more importance has to be added. Aristotle's deep interest in the phenomena of life—an interest which was probably awakened in him prior to his entrance into the Platonic school, and which in any case was quite independent of the Platonic philosophy—not only introduced science into a new field, but also suggested a new way of looking at things in general. The ideas of organism and development, indeed, were not quite alien to Plato: they were partly involved in his scheme of education based as it is on the idea of the latent rationality of opinion which it is the object of all philosophical teaching to bring to self-consciousness. He saw clearly that the highest ideal for man is to become what potentially he is, to develop the capacities which are inherent in his nature. But Plato's almost ex-

clusive occupation with the theoretical and practical interests of *men* caused him to neglect the relations between humanity and the lower forms of life, or, so far as he paid regard to them, to interpret the animal as a degraded and degenerated form of man. His sharp distinction of soul, as that which is moved by itself, from body, as that which is moved by another—and which indeed he sometimes treats as if it were a corpse—tended to obscure the unity of the system of things, and the continuity of gradation by which one stage of existence is linked on to another. Hence all appearances of design in the products of nature were apt to be attributed to conscious purpose rather than to the working of an immanent teleological principle. On the other hand, Aristotle recognises a purposive activity in all organised beings, an activity which is independent of consciousness, but which, in becoming conscious, does not essentially change its character. There is thus a correspondence or analogy running through all the steps of the *scala naturae*, connecting the unconscious life of plants with the relatively conscious life of animals, and the self-conscious life of man. For, in each case, there is an organising principle, which Aristotle calls the soul. The Aristotelian idea of the soul is, indeed, a new and original conception: for in Plato the soul is not generally distinguished from the intelligence; and, though, in the *Timaeus*, it appears as the principle

that combines the intelligence with the body, this mediation is little more than a word, and shows only that Plato felt the need of some connecting link, which he was unable from the resources of his philosophy to supply. Aristotle, on the other hand, grasps the idea of organism, and declares the soul to be the form which realises, or brings into activity and actuality, the capacities of an organic body. Hence in his view the soul cannot exist without the body, nor the body without the soul. In short, on the first aspect of Aristotle's philosophy, and subject to a reservation in favour of the reason, soul and body seem to be taken by him as different but essentially correlated aspects of the life of one individual substance. Thus he rejects the Platonic idea that all souls are simply minds in various degrees of obscuration, owing to the nature of the bodies in which they are incorporated; and with it he repudiates the doctrine of transmigration, and, especially the transmigration of the soul of a man into the body of an animal. In place of this doctrine, he substitutes the conception of a hierarchical order of psychical existence, in which the higher soul includes the lower, and reduces it into the basis or material of its own new principle of life. But just because of this—because, in Aristotle's conception of it, the higher life presupposes the lower and makes it the means of its own realisation—Aristotle is able to

regard the whole process as one, to personify nature as a power that does nothing in vain, and even to look upon the whole ascending movement of organic being as an effort after the complete and self-determined existence which is found only in God. Each of the finite creatures is thus regarded as seeking for the divine, but able to realise it only within the limits of its own form. Aiming at eternity, it is confined within the conditions of an individual existence which is finite and perishable, though it attains to a kind of image of eternity in the continuity of the species. It attains it, however, in a still higher way, in so far as its own limited life is made the basis of a higher life; till in the ascending scale we reach at last the rational life of man, who, at least in the pure activity of contemplation, can directly participate in the eternal and the divine.

So far the evolutionary conceptions of Aristotle seem to carry us beyond many of the difficulties of the Platonic theory, and to point towards a more complete idealism than Plato had ever imagined. For, if a philosopher be able to regard all nature as the realisation of an immanent design, which becomes more and more completely manifested the higher we rise in the scale of being; if, further, he be able to view the imperfect life of the lower orders of creatures as subordinated to the fuller existence of those which stand higher in that scale, it is natural to

expect that in the last resort he will be able to regard all being as the manifestation or realisation of the perfectly self-determined life of God. On this view accident could exist only from the point of view of the part, as separated from, and opposed to the whole; it would be eliminated more and more as we advance to the point of view of existences which are relatively more complete, and it would disappear altogether from the point of view of the divine centre of the whole system. Matter, as opposed to form, would become a relative conception, and the phenomenal world would simply be the real world imperfectly understood. The organic view of the universe would thus subordinate, and take up into itself the mechanical; and in place of the Platonic conception that reason "persuades necessity to work out that which is best in most things," we should be able to substitute the doctrine that all things must, ultimately at least, be regarded as the manifestations of a divine reason.

Such a view, however, we cannot attribute to Aristotle. The organic idea, which he seems to accept, especially in his conception of life in all its forms, is continually traversed by another idea which is essentially alien to it—the idea that all finite existence is a combination of elements which are not essentially related. Aristotle, in fact, while accepting the Platonic opposition of form to matter,

gives to the latter a definite name, and a more distinct position than Plato had assigned to it. For in the *Republic* Plato had spoken of it only as 'Not-Being,' and had referred the defects of finite existence to the fact that such existence stands midway between Not-Being and the substantial reality of the ideas. And in the *Timaeus* he seemed still farther to lower the character of phenomena by treating them as mere images or reflexions of true Being, explaining the appearance of substantial reality which they present by the spatial conditions which attach to such images. He seemed, therefore, to be endeavouring to escape the admission of a genuine dualism, to which nevertheless he was driven by what he calls a 'spurious reasoning.' Aristotle, on the other hand, looks for a substratum for all change in something which remains while its qualities are in process of being altered. The change of properties is, he argues, impossible, unless there be a substance which undergoes this change; and the genesis and decay of substances is impossible, unless there is something which passes from the one form of existence to the other. Hence, as all forms of being are changeable, we are ultimately driven by a necessary argument from analogy, to conceive pure matter as the ultimate substratum of all that movement or transitionary process to which finite things as such are subjected. Matter is, therefore, the possibility of all things and the actuality of

nothing; an idea which is made to seem less irrational by the doctrine that it never exists except under some elementary form. Perhaps we may better bring out the effect of Aristotle's view by saying—what Aristotle himself does not say—that matter is that in the nature of finite things and beings which causes their existence to be a continual process of change, that is, causes it to be not a pure activity which begins and ends in itself like that of God, the unmoved mover, but a continual movement from possibility to actuality, which comes to an end in one subject only to begin in another in endless succession. Aristotle, indeed, avoids verbally the contradiction of making matter, which in itself is absolutely passive, the cause of the transitory character of the existence that is realised in it; but he does so, as we shall see hereafter, only by taking for granted the transition from the eternal to the temporal, from the pure activity of the divine intelligence to the movement and change of the phenomenal world. Yet this is the very thing which needs to be explained.

This general antagonism or imperfect union of matter and form shows itself even in Aristotle's conception of the organic process. At times, as we have seen, he emphasises the unity of form and matter, and therefore of soul and body, so strongly as to make them essentially correlative with each other

—opposite but complementary aspects of the same being, which are only separated by abstraction. Thus when he declares that the ultimate matter of a substance is one and the same with its form, though the one is to be taken as expressing the potentiality of which the other is the actuality,[1] he suggests the conception of a unity which is beyond the difference of the two elements, and in which, therefore, they entirely lose their independent character. So far as this is the case, it would be true to say, as Aristotle does say in the immediate context, that no reason can be given for the unity of form and matter, except that they are reciprocally form and matter to each other. From such a point of view we could not speak of form acting upon matter, or matter reacting upon form, but only of the whole substance as manifesting itself in these two aspects. But Aristotle does not consistently think of it in this way. For the most part he seems rather to regard the form as giving to the matter a unity which does not belong to it, and to which it is never completely subordinated. Thus he declares that the soul neither grows nor decays, though all the activities usually ascribed to it are conditioned by the growth and decay of the body. The soul, in fact, is taken as an identity which abides in unity with itself above all change; and which, though it gives rise to manifold

[1] *Met.*, 1045*b*, 18.

activities and changes in the individual subject, never itself enters into the process. While, therefore, we can see that Aristotle is striving against the tendency to separate soul and body, yet his way of expressing the difference between them inevitably leads him back to the Platonic conception of a spiritual being which is dragged down into a lower region, and reduced to an imperfect kind of activity by the vehicle which it has to use. This tendency to fall from the conception of an organism to that of a σύνθετον—a complex existence compounded of a mortal body and a spiritual principle which finds an inadequate expression therein—is shown even in his account of the animal life; as when he tells us that the decay of age does not affect the soul, but only the organs through which it acts, and that, therefore, "if the old man had the young man's eyes, he would see as well as the young man." Here the soul is manifestly taken as an abstract form which is not relative to the body; not as a unity which maintains itself in change, but as one which is entirely lifted above change and unaffected by it.

The difficulty, however, takes a more definite form in relation to the reason of man, which, in Aristotle's own words, "seems to be born in us as an independent substance, which is beyond decay and death." [1]

[1] *De An.*, 408*b*, 19.

In this case the question is not merely of the presence or absence of a special bodily organ; for reason, according to Aristotle, has no such organ. Yet its existence in the body and its connexion with the animal nature, subjects it to conditions which alter its pure activity, and bring it down from the intuitive contemplation of truth to the sphere of imagination and of discursive thought. Hence Aristotle says that "the discursive reason and the feelings of love and hate are not modes or affections of reason, but of the subject in which it is realised, though they are due to that realisation. Hence, when this subject is destroyed, reason ceases to remember and to love; for such states belong not to it, but to the being in whom soul and body are combined (*τοῦ κοινοῦ*), and this, of course, perishes. But reason in itself is something more divine and cannot be the subject of any such modes as these."[1]

It would appear, then, that Aristotle holds that the individual mind, as such, *i.e.* the individual's consciousness of his own past and of all the particulars of his individual life, with all the desires and feelings which accompany such a consciousness, is changeable and mortal. In this region of the finite, reason sinks from intuition and contemplation into 'discourse of reason'; in other words, it no longer sees all things in their transparent unity, but, aided by sensuous

[1] *De An.*, 408*b*, 25 *seq.*

images, its thought moves from one object to another, distinguishing and connecting the different elements by definite acts of analysis and synthesis, of judgment and inference. Thus a deep line of division is drawn between the intuitive and the discursive intelligence, between the pure reason and the passions and interests of mortal life. And the organic idea, which is already strained to the utmost by Aristotle in his conception of the relations between the form and the matter, and, therefore, between the soul and body of plants and animals, is once for all set aside as regards the rational life of man.

The result, then, is that, though at first Aristotle seems to free himself from the dualism of Plato, and to rise to an organic point of view, he is unable in the long run to maintain this advantage. It was a distinct advance upon Plato to repudiate the mystic tendency shown in some parts of the Platonic writings, the tendency to regard the connexion of soul and body as accidental or external. It was a still farther advance to maintain that matter was not merely the 'Not-Being' of the *Republic*, or the spatial conditions which, according to the *Timaeus*, distinguish images or appearances from reality, but the necessary correlate of form. But Aristotle was not able to maintain himself at this point of view, or to work it out to all its consequences. Hence the very fact that he gave a distinctly positive

character to matter as the substratum of motion and change, while yet he was unable to conceive it as simply the manifestation or necessary complement of the ideal principle, drives him in the end to a more definitely dualistic result than had been reached by Plato. It also causes him to neglect or reject those speculations in which Plato comes nearest to a concrete, as opposed to an abstract idealism. Thus, in the end, as we shall see more fully hereafter, Aristotle comes to a view of reason, and of God as the unmoved mover, which carries us far in the direction of the mysticism of Plotinus.

LECTURE ELEVENTH.

ARISTOTLE'S VIEW OF REASON IN ITS PRACTICAL USE.

In the last lecture I gave a general view of Aristotle's way of thinking as contrasted with that of Plato. I pointed out that he makes a great advance upon Plato in so far as he frees himself from the tendency to oppose form to matter and soul to body, and thereby initiates a more organic view of the world, and, in particular, of the phenomena of life in all its forms—vegetable, animal and human. But just because he is not able to carry out this new way of thinking to its consequences, in the end he becomes the author of a more definite and pronounced form of dualism than that of Plato. For, though in his philosophy matter gets a more definite position, it is not after all made the true correlate of form. Hence it sinks into an external something which the form needs in order to realise itself, but in which it can only realise itself imperfectly. And even this necessity seems to be denied in the case of the

pure intelligence, which is conceived as so complete in itself, that its association with the body is not required for its realisation, but rather, through such association, it is drawn down into a lower kind of activity. It is this view of reason which is the source of the greatest difficulty in Aristotle's psychology; it manifests itself again in his conception of morality and of the relation of the practical to the contemplative life; and, finally, it determines his idea of the nature of God and of his relations to the world.

This will become more completely understood if we follow the line of the ascent to man, which Aristotle traces out for us in the *De Anima*.

He begins by telling us that there is no proper definition of the soul, if a definition be understood to mean the determination of a generic form which remains identical with itself in all its specific manifestations.[1] When we speak of organic beings as having souls, all we mean is that in each of them there is an immanent principle of unity. But this principle takes a different character in all the species that fall under it; for these species are not co-ordinate. On the contrary, they form a series, in which each later member takes up the previous member into itself, but at the same time so transforms it that there is nothing which is

[1] *De Anima*, 414*b*, 20 *seq.*

common to them all. It might, indeed, be said that what is possessed by the lowest kind of soul is common also to all the higher kinds: but this is not strictly true; for in the higher soul, the lower ceases to be what it was, as it is made subordinate to a different principle of unity, and its own characteristics are thereby completely changed. Thus the life of sensation which is characteristic of animals is not simply added to the nutritive life of plants; it so absorbs and transfigures it, that, though all the elements of the latter are present in the former, none of them is just what it was in the former. And the same is the case when we pass from the sensitive life of animals to the rational life of men. In the transition to a higher stage of development, the elements of the lower stage are preserved, but they are, in the language of Aristotle, reduced to potentiality; they are absorbed and taken up into a new form of being. The individuality of the more imperfect form of existence disappears, as it becomes the material or basis for a new *principium individuationis*. Hence the different species are connected only by a certain bond of analogy, in so far as the relations of form and matter are the same in all.

To begin at the beginning, the life of plants is a life of nutrition and reproduction, in which the individual assimilates material constituents from its

environment to subserve its own existence and thus goes through a course of growth and development, which in the end passes into decay and death. So long as this series of changes goes on, the individual unity of the plant maintains itself, and reproduction is only a farther extension of the same process whereby a specific form is realised in a new individual which must go through the same cycle of change. For, as Aristotle says, adopting the language of Plato, "it is the most natural of all functions for the living being to produce another like itself, the plant a plant, the animal an animal, in order that they may partake in the eternal, so far as is possible for them. This is what all beings seek for, and in view of this they do all that it is natural for them to do. We must, however, distinguish between the objective end which they all seek and the realisation of it which is possible to the particular subject. Now, since living beings cannot partake in the divine and the eternal by continuing their individual existence—it being impossible for a nature which is finite and perishable to maintain for ever its individuality and numerical identity—they partake in it as they can. In other words, they abide, not in themselves, but in what is like them; not as numerically one, but in the unity of one species."[1] What we have in the plant

[1] *De Anima*, 414*a*, 26.

life is, therefore, not merely a continuation of the process of change, whereby the different inorganic elements are incessantly passing into each other; for these elements and their process are subordinated to a higher principle of unity, first in the individual, and then, when the individual fails, in the race. Thus by the continuous cyclical movement of individual and racial life the transitory existence of finite beings is turned, in Platonic language, into a moving image of eternity.

Again, just as the nutritive life is not a mere repetition of the process of the elements, nor even that with the addition of another process, but involves the subjection of these elements to a higher principle of unity, so the sensitive and appetitive life of animals is not an external addition to the nutritive and reproductive process, but absorbs and, so to speak, transubstantiates its results. In one sense it might be said that the animal goes through the same round of existence as the plant, and that the ends realised in it are still the same, the maintenance of the individual and of his kind. But this is only superficially true: for these very ends become changed in character when they are mediated by consciousness, by sensation and desire. It is true, indeed, that these ends do not exist in their generality for the animal itself, any more than for the plant, and therefore the animal cannot be said to will them,

It is only of nature, as an unconscious principle, which realises itself in them through their particular sensations and appetites, that Aristotle speaks as willing the good of the individual and of his kind. But the animal is capable of perceiving the particular objects that secure or hinder its well-being, and of feeling desire or aversion in relation to them. For the sensitive soul stands in an ideal relation to its objects, and can receive their sensible forms without the matter. Moreover, these sensible forms are not impressed on its organs from without, but the object without only calls into action what is potentially present in the sensitive faculty. Hence sense cannot perceive anything but its special object, and even that only within the limits of its sensibility. From this point of view its perceptions are merely a development of its own nature, and it might fairly be said to perceive nothing but itself.[1] We have further to observe that all sensations, in order that they may be compared and distinguished from each other, must be brought to a centre of sensibility in what we should call the feeling self.[2] And the same must of course be true of the desiring self, though Aristotle does not call special attention to this.

In both these forms of life, as I have already observed, the idea of the organic correlation of body and soul conflicts with Aristotle's general conception

[1] *De Anima*, 417*a*, 21. [2] *De An.*, 426*b*, 8.

of the relation of form to matter, which is determined by form, yet not altogether subjected to it: for matter is always regarded as having a relative independence. Thus the material constituents of the body have a process of their own which is never completely subordinated to the process of plant life, and which in the decay and death of the plant ceases to be subordinated to it at all. And, in like manner, the nutritive life has a process of its own which is not unconditionally subordinated to the process of animal existence, or completely absorbed in it. But the discordance between these two aspects of the relation of form and matter becomes still more definitely and distinctly revealed in Aristotle's conception of the life of man. The form of man's life is reason; and reason is not merely one form among others, it is the universal form, the form which embraces and prevails over all other forms. And reason has, as Aristotle puts it, no opposite, nothing from which it is distinguished or to which it is externally related; if it is determined, it is only as it determines itself. If, therefore, reason be taken as the form of the life of any being, it would seem that that life must not only be a stage higher in development than the life of animals; it must be qualitatively distinguished from it. For there can be no continuity between the relative and the absolute, between that which acts only as it is

determined by something else and that which determines itself. In fact, it seems something like a paradox that such a principle should manifest itself in the form of any particular existence. Yet this paradox, after all, is not one that arises out of the peculiar doctrines of Aristotle. It is the essential paradox or problem of the life of man, as a being who is, in one point of view, only a particular existence like an animal or a plant, but who, nevertheless, has the principle of universality, the principle of self-consciousness and self-determination within him. It is, therefore, by no subtilty of ancient dialectic, but by the nature of the case, that Aristotle is forced to recognise two contrasted aspects of the nature of man, as at once particular and universal, or, we might even say, finite and infinite. How does he endeavour to solve this problem?

It must, I think, be confessed that Aristotle has no final solution for this difficulty, but rather that he evades it, as the Scholastics so often evaded their difficulties, by a distinction. In other words, he breaks the unity of man's life and divides it into two departments or spheres of existence, in either of which he may live and move. In both spheres, indeed, man manifests his rational nature; for reason is the form of his being, and it is impossible to live the life of a man without, in some sense, living the life of reason. But there is an exercise of reason

in which it is determined by itself, and deals only with purely intelligible objects; and there is another exercise of reason in which it deals with a material which is alien to itself—a material which it can control and subordinate to its own ends, but which it can never completely assimilate. Thus in relation to the immediate world of experience reason may be regarded as both immanent and transcendent. But it is only as transcendent that it can fully realise itself and come to a clear consciousness of its own nature; while, as immanent, it is obstructed by the nature of the subject-matter with which it has to deal, and drawn down into a lower form of activity in which it can never adequately manifest or satisfy itself. Speaking generally, these two spheres correspond to the theoretical and the practical use of reason; for, in its theoretical use, reason is concerned only to discover the universal principles which underlie all existence, and to follow them out to their logical consequences; its work, therefore, is purely scientific, and the results it reaches will be necessary and exact. In its practical use, on the other hand, it has to deal with the world of immediate experience, as well as with the nature of man, in all their complexity and particularity: it has to determine the ends which, as a rational being who is also an animal, he has to realise, and to consider the means of realising them in the world.

In this sphere, therefore, its objects are practical rather than scientific; and if, by reflexion, it can attain to a kind of science, yet the results of such science must be only approximate and inexact—they can reach only generality and not universality. We have, then, a broad division between the two spheres of theory and practice; and, in accordance with this division, we have to distinguish between pure science, which has to do with intelligible reality, as such—with the ideal forms of things and their consequences—and that lower kind of science which seeks to throw light upon the particulars of experience that have to be dealt with in practice. In the sequel we may have to admit some modification of this contrast, and that, indeed, on both sides; for Aristotle's actual methods of theoretical and practical science do not strictly correspond to the sharp distinction which he draws between them; but it will conduce to clearness to begin by taking the division in its most rigid form. We have, therefore, first of all, to realise that Aristotle conceives the life of man as consisting in the exercise of reason, and as comprising two distinct forms of that exercise, *θεωρία* and *πρᾶξις*, the pure activity of contemplation, and the mixed and imperfect activity of the practical life. And we have further to realise that this division is not quite exclusive: for contemplation or science enters into practice, though only as a means to an end beyond itself.

This broad division of the contemplative from the practical life is one of the points in which Aristotle separates himself decisively from Plato, though only by giving further play to tendencies which are already visible in the Platonic writings. For Plato's philosophy, like that of his master Socrates, was, in the first instance, practical, and it was only by gradual and almost unwilling steps that he came to make theory an end in itself apart from practice. And, even when he did so, he was never content to make theory his sole end, but to the last sought to bring the highest ideas of his speculation to bear upon the reformation of Greek political life. The *Republic*, however, shows the parting of the ways. It shows us how Plato, in the very effort to render his practical proposals complete and to base them upon the highest philosophical principles, was gradually led to invert the relations of theory and practice, and to treat the latter as a secondary result of the former.

Thus in the first part of the *Republic* Plato starts from the actual life of a Greek State, and seems tacitly to assume, what Aristotle declared in so many words, that such a State is the *πέρας τῆς αὐταρκείας*—the precise form of social organisation in which the moral nature of man can find its best education and realisation. And if he seeks to improve upon the actual models of political life set before him in Athens or Sparta, it is not by introducing another

political idea, but rather by working out more fully the principles that seemed to underlie these models. Thus his socialism and communism were only the further development of that tendency to lose the man in the citizen which had already been carried so far in the actual life of Greece.

But the very attempt to universalise the principle of Greek politics inevitably led Plato to aim at something more than it was possible to realise in a Greek municipal society. The philosopher, he maintained, must rule; and the philosopher was one who looked beyond the unity of the State to the unity of the whole universe, and who could not, therefore, treat the former as an absolute end. The Idea of Good, the principle of all being and of all knowing, must be made the basis and the object of his life; and the State, with its bourgeoise ethics of use and wont and its mythological religion, could not be recognised by him as more than a subordinate sphere of reality. If, therefore, the philosopher has laid upon him the duty of governing and regulating the State, yet his true life is elsewhere. His function as ruler, indeed, is to make the civic community a copy of the ideal order of the intelligible world; but his main interest lies in the original and not in the copy. Ethics and politics have for him become secondary to philosophy or theology, and the practical has been subordinated to the contemplative life.

And soon the question must arise whether the connexion of the two can be maintained, and whether the municipal State can be brought in relation to the type set up for it, or reconstituted upon the model of the intelligible world. The last word of the *Republic* on this subject shows that Plato found it hard to pour the new wine into the old bottles. "I conclude," says Socrates, "that the man of understanding will direct all his energies throughout life to those studies which will impress upon the soul the characters of wisdom, temperance, and justice, and will neglect all others." . . . "Then," answers Glaucon, "if that be his motive, he will not care to interfere with politics." "By the dog of Egypt, you are wrong," replies Socrates; "for he certainly will do so, at least in *his own* city, though perhaps not in the city in which he happens to be born." "I understand," says Glaucon; "you mean that he will be an active politician in the city which we have now organised, the city which as yet exists merely in idea; for, I believe, it is not to be found anywhere on earth." "Well," answers Socrates again, "perhaps in heaven there is laid up a pattern for him who wishes to behold it, and, beholding, to organise his own life by its laws. But the question of its present or future existence upon earth is quite unimportant; for, in any case, the philosopher will live after the laws of that city only and not of any other."[1]

[1] *Rep.*, 592 A.

What we gather from this remarkable utterance is that Plato found it impossible to raise the Greek State, which still remained for him the highest type of political association, to the level of his philosophical principles. In fact, he makes no attempt to connect the reconstruction of the State with the Idea of Good, and the only place in which he gives a practical turn to his highest ideas is in the remarkable picture of the philosopher which he draws at the beginning of the *Republic*. There he endeavours to show that one who views all particular things in the light of the whole, as the philosopher must do, will necessarily acquire an absolute generosity and freedom of spirit, which will raise him far above the level of the ordinary civic virtues;[1] but Plato does not enquire how, in that case, his philosophy can throw any light upon the organisation of the State. Rather, as Plato seems to indicate, his contemplation of ideal reality must bring with it a depreciatory estimate of all political interests, and even of the finite life in general. "Do you think," says Socrates, "that a spirit full of such lofty thoughts, and privileged to contemplate all time and existence, can possibly attach any great importance to this life of ours?"[2] And, in another place, he anticipates Aristotle in drawing a broad line of

[1] Cf. *Rep.*, 491 B, where these virtues are asserted to be a hindrance to philosophy.

[2] *Rep.*, 486 A.

division between the ethical virtues—which "are like qualities of the body, which, not being in us at first, are put into us by training and habit"[1]—and the wisdom of the philosophers, which is based on the pure faculty of intelligence and requires nothing for its development, except to be turned from sensible things to the contemplation of ideal reality. On this view, however, the relation of the philosopher to the State seems to drop away from him, or to become an external adjunct to his life, which can be easily disjoined from it altogether. He owes it as a duty to the city that has educated him that he should be willing to undertake its government, but his real vocation lies not in any practical endeavours, but in the contemplation of the ideal and the divine.

When the link between theory and practice had become so weak, it was easily broken by Aristotle, who summarily rejects the idea of connecting ethics and politics with the highest principle of philosophy. Accordingly, in the *Ethics* he sets aside the Platonic Idea of Good—ostensibly, indeed, on the ground that it is an abstraction which has no definite meaning, or which at least is too vague and general to supply any practical guide to human life. But Aristotle's quarrel was not merely with the ideal theory of Plato, but with his whole attempt to connect ethics with metaphysics, and to base the regulation of conduct upon

[1] *Rep.*, 518 E.

the conception of the absolute Good. While, therefore, Plato, in the effort to reach the deepest and most comprehensive view of ethics, had been drawn onward from the consideration of the unity of the State to that of the unity of the whole system of the universe, Aristotle entirely repudiates this line of thought as carrying us beyond the limits of the matter in hand, and demands that ethics and politics should be treated as a separate science, and saved from the irrelevant intrusion of metaphysics. And his ultimate reason for this was not that he denied the existence of an absolute Good, which it is possible for us to know; for, as we shall see, his own metaphysical investigations were directed to the discovery of such a Good. It lay rather in his conviction that our relation to that Good cannot be practical but only theoretical; while the sphere of ethics, on the other hand, is not theory but practice. Theory, therefore, can be of use only so far as it is a means to practice; for "we study ethics not that we may know what virtue is, but that we may become good men; otherwise there could be no advantage in it whatsoever."[1] It is true, indeed, that ethics starts with the conception of man as a rational subject who seeks to organise his life with a view to the end which, relatively to him, is the highest; and no doubt also, what is highest relatively to man's nature is the exercise of his reason: but in the ethical sphere

[1] *Eth.*, 1003*b*, 27.

this does not mean the exercise of pure reason upon its appropriate objects. It means, looking at the matter in a subjective point of view, the exercise of reason in governing the passions and giving unity and order to the inner life of man as a complex being, who is a compound of 'dust and deity': for he who speaks of man, as Aristotle says, προστίθησι καὶ θηρίον:[1] that is, he must take into account the lower as well as the higher nature of man. And, looking at it in an objective point of view, it means the control of the conditions presented by the environment of the life of man. so as to gain opportunity for the exercise of his highest qualities. In both aspects, ethics has to guide man in dealing with the particular facts of his existence, and it has, therefore, to take account of external conditions and, therefore, of an element of contingency which cannot be brought within the sphere of pure reason.

And this also greatly affects the value of science in relation to morality; for, while reason can rise above the particular experiences of the moral and social life to the general conception of the end to be sought, and of the means whereby it may be attained, it is hampered in its processes both of induction and deduction by conditions which do not apply to pure science. In the first place, ethical experience is not the product of reflexion, but of the unconscious action of reason in the development of social life; and, we

[1] *Pol.*, 1287*a*, 30.

may add, it must have been already acquired by the individual himself, who seeks to interpret it, or even to understand its interpretation when it is presented by others. For, only one who by participation in the common life of the State has had his moral nature developed, is capable of rising to the knowledge of ethical principles or even of making anything of them when they are set before him by others. The value of scientific ethics is, therefore, that it brings into clear consciousness the ideas which underlie the unreasoned ethics of the ordinary good man and good citizen; and he who would recognise the truth of ethical science or gain any profit from it, must already possess in himself the data on which it is based. It is true that for such an one ethical science may have great value; for the reflexion which discovers the universal principles involved in the special rules and customs of life will enable him to criticise and correct the very experience from which he starts. The statesman, above all—who has not merely to find his way amid the difficulties of private life, but to meet the larger demands of legislation and administration, and even, it may be, to make modifications in the constitution of the community which he governs—must know the grounds upon which the State in general, and his particular form of State, are based. He must have analysed the moral nature of man, and examined

the particular excellences that need to be called forth, and the particular vices which need to be repressed, by a good education. But even in his case Aristotle insists on the necessity of that immediate sense or intuition of moral truth, which can only be developed by habit. Moral science, therefore, must not only be based upon the immediate judgments of the individual who is imbued with the ethical spirit of a civic society, but it depends for the proper application of its general principles upon the peculiar tact and power of handling ethical interests which is due to that spirit.

Now no one can fail to recognise that, in his account of the development of the moral consciousness through habit and in his rejection of the Socratic doctrine that 'virtue is knowledge,' Aristotle is expressing an important aspect of the truth—if at least we limit knowledge to the reflective form of science. It is easy to show that the science of ethics presupposes the existence of morality, and cannot be the cause of that existence. If all the spiritual possessions of man, and, in particular, the institutions and customs of the society of which he is a member, be produced by the activity of the reason that is within him, yet they are certainly not due to a reason that is conscious of what it is doing, or aware of its own processes. So far, therefore, even the profoundest believer in the rational nature of man would admit

that the unconscious comes before the conscious, or, what is the same thing, that the particular application of moral principles is prior to their distinct recognition as general principles. To say otherwise would be like saying that no one could trace effects to causes without having recognised and defined the idea of causality.

But, in the second place, Aristotle means more than this. He means that in the determination of particular objects by the ordinary consciousness there is a synthesis of reason with an irrational element—with an element of real contingency of which we can only say that it exists, and that we cannot explain it by any rational principle. Hence, strictly speaking, we cannot know the particular; we can only grasp it in the immediate intuition of sense; or, to put it in a more directly Aristotelian way, our knowledge of objects becomes actual, and not merely potential, only when the consciousness of the universal is brought into relation with the perceptions of sense.[1] There is, therefore, an element in our consciousness which cannot be universalised, or made intelligible, in the way of science. This fact, however, does not embarrass us in the sphere of pure science; for, in Aristotle's view of it, science has only to do with general principles and what can be deduced from them. In the practical life, however, it becomes

[1] *Met.*, 1036*a*, 5: cf. 1087*a*, 17.

highly important, for action has directly to do with the particular—with the particular act to be done and the particular end to be achieved. And this can be apprehended only in an immediate intuition, which might be called a moral sense, if that name did not do injustice to the rational element involved in it.[1] This moral sense cannot be produced in us by teaching or by any purely intellectual process; it is due only to that combination of the rational with the irrational factor, which belongs to our nature as thinking beings who are also animals; and if it can be developed by training, and especially by the training of social life, yet the process of such training cannot be referred to reason alone. In other words, our appetites and passions have not reason immanent in them, and must have it superinduced upon them from without by exercise and habituation. They have in themselves no measure, they fluctuate between excess and defect, and only accidentally hit the golden mean. Hence, measure has to be imposed upon them by reason, and gradually to be wrought into their texture by discipline. It is as with the sculptor, who has to give form to a material which in itself is formless, or has only a form which is not relative to his purpose, and who, therefore, in shaping the parts of his statue, has so to guide his hand that each of them may be in just proportion to all the rest.

[1] *Eth.*, 1142*a*, 25.

In the creation of such a work of art, the exact measure of each part has to be preserved, and the slightest exaggeration or diminution of any limb or feature may make all the difference between beauty and ugliness. So also it is with the moral artist, who has to take the rough block of humanity, with the animal nature which is its basis, and so to restrain or to encourage, to weaken or to strengthen, the different passions and tendencies, as to fashion out of them a noble character. Nor does it alter the case that each man, to a certain extent at least, is the moral artist of himself. Here, too, the material is given independently of the reason either of the individual himself or of those who regulate the life of the society in which he is a member; and the manifold contingency to which that material is subjected, makes it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to attain a satisfactory result. All we can say is that goodness is shown in making the best of the circumstances.

We can now see what it is that makes Aristotle dwell so persistently upon the inexactness of the science of ethics. It is not merely that the subject is so complex that it is impossible to disentangle all the threads that are interwoven in it. Nor is it, as has been suggested, that Aristotle mistakes the difficulties of the practice of science for the difficulties of the science of practice; for, though the application of any science must involve many

considerations which are omitted in pure theory, that does not interfere with the exactness of the science itself. The real reason is that, in Aristotle's way of conceiving it, the science of practice has little or no value apart from practice, because of the essential nature of its subject-matter. It is that the actions of men involve a realisation of reason in an element which is not purely rational. Hence, from the pure idea of man as a rational being, we cannot develop an adequate conception of the methods in which reason is to be realised in human life. We are obliged to take the actual types of morality as they present themselves in experience, and from them to extract such general ideas as may give some help to the citizen and the statesman in moulding their own character and the character of others. And even in this case the teachings of science will be unavailing, unless such citizen or statesman is already deeply imbued with the spirit of the State. Thus *φρόνησις* can never become *σοφία*, practical wisdom can never be raised into the form of pure science. Accordingly, in his ethical and political philosophy, Aristotle clings very closely to the facts of Hellenic character and Hellenic institutions, and his ideal of the State is little more than a selection and combination of the features which present themselves in different Greek cities. It is an ideal Athens, with the mob of mechanics, and

all that are incapable of the highest civic functions, shut out from authority; or it is an ideal Sparta with its admirable discipline directed to higher ends than war. But Aristotle never pretends, like Plato, directly to connect the ethical and political life with the highest exercise of the intelligence: indeed, he tells us explicitly that that life belongs to man as a *σύνθετον*—a complex or compound being with a mortal as well as an immortal part. Hence he speaks contemptuously of the notion of ascribing moral virtues to the gods, who, as purely spiritual beings, cannot descend into the region of practice. "That perfect happiness is," he declares, "a purely contemplative activity, may be seen from this that we ascribe it most of all to the gods. But what kinds of moral action are we to attribute to them? Are we to say that they do just actions? As if it were not absurd to think of the gods as making bargains with each other and duly restoring what is entrusted to them, and the like. Or are we to say that they perform acts of bravery, enduring dangers and encountering risks because it is noble so to do? Or, again, have they to show liberality in their dealings? But to whom will they give anything, and what is the coin or currency that they use? Or are they to be thought of as temperate? Would it not be a quaint praise of the gods to say that they have no bad impulses to check? In

truth, when we go through all the moral virtues, we see clearly that such practical activities are mean and unworthy of the gods."[1]

Whether the same objections will not lie against all the theoretic activities by which the intelligence of a finite being advances to the discovery of the truth, and, indeed, against every exercise of the intellect short of the beatific vision, Aristotle does not here enquire. But the consequence for ethical science is obvious. The ethical teacher must not attempt to pass beyond the boundaries of ethical experience, or to connect his science with metaphysical principles. He must be content to bring to light the principles that underlie Greek ethical practice, and to use them to improve that practice. In this lies at once the value of ethical studies, if confined within their proper range, and their valuelessness, if carried beyond it. Aristotle, therefore, frequently insists on the uselessness of ethical theories that are not based upon an actually realised ethical life, and do not throw new light upon it. Morals, in his view of it, is essentially a science that springs from practice and returns to practice; and for it to set up any other end than this, or to pretend to be science for science's sake, is to forfeit all its claims to the relative place which it holds in human knowledge. It is only pure θεωρία, pure contemplation, that can pass beyond these limi-

[1] *Eth.*, 1178*b*, 7 *seq.*

tations, can leave behind it the uncertain and troubled region of the contingent, in which lie the interests and cares of man's transitory life, and can attain to that kind of reality which is independent of time and change.

Nor is there any possibility of connecting the relative truths of ethics with the absolute principles of pure metaphysic. There is, indeed, a kind of connexion between the practical and the theoretical life, in so far as the former is the precondition of the latter: but this is only an external and accidental connexion. The State is needed to protect and to educate man, to furnish the material basis for his existence and the sphere for the exercise of his moral energies. It is, so to speak, the ladder on which he has to climb up to the higher life. But with that which is highest of all, it has nothing directly to do. The contemplative life, and it alone, is self-sufficient and complete in itself; or it would be so for us men were it not that, as mortal and changeable beings, we cannot continuously maintain the pure activity of thought, and must therefore fall back on the ethical virtues, which "enable us to play our parts as men."[1] In showing the elevation of the contemplative life above all material and even moral interests, Aristotle's sober style for once gets a tinge of poetry. "Such a life," he declares, "is greater than

[1] πρὸς τὸ ἀνθρωπεύεσθαι. *Eth.*, 1178*b*, 7.

can be measured by a human standard, and man can live it not *qua* man, but only as there is something divine within him. And the active development of this *something* is as much superior to the exercise of the other virtues as reason in its purity is superior to the mixed or composite nature of humanity in general. If then reason is divine in comparison with the man's whole nature, the life according to reason must be divine in comparison with human life. Nor ought we to pay regard to those who exhort us that, as we are men, we ought to think human things and to keep our eyes upon mortality: rather, as far as may be, we should endeavour to rise to that which is immortal and do everything to live in conformity with what is best in us; for, if in bulk it is but small, yet in power and dignity it far exceeds everything else that we possess. Nay, it may even be regarded as constituting our very individuality, since it is the supreme element, and that which is best in us. And if so, then it would be absurd for us to choose any life but that which is properly our own. And this agrees with what was said before" (in relation to the definition of happiness) "that that which is characteristic of any nature is that which is best for it, and gives it most joy. Such, therefore, to man is the life according to reason, since it is this that makes him man."[1]

[1] *Eth.*, 1177*b*, 27.

In this passage we must not miss the verbal contradiction. The theoretic life is beyond the measure of humanity; it is the life of God rather than of man. Yet, from another point of view, it is the life wherein that which constitutes the very nature and individuality of man, his characteristic power or faculty, alone finds its appropriate exercise. The sharp division which Aristotle makes between the two lives which man can live, makes it difficult for him to say where the central principle of man's being is to be placed, and what, strictly speaking, constitutes the *self* or *ego* to which everything else in him is to be referred. His words remind us of a saying of Emerson that the consciousness of man is a sliding-scale, which at one time seems to identify him with the divine spirit, and at another with the very flesh of his body. The rift that runs through the philosophy of Plato seems here to have widened till it rends human nature asunder. The result is a division of the contemplative from the practical life, which has had momentous results in the history of philosophy and theology. It is the source of what has sometimes been called the 'intellectualism' of Greek philosophy, which passed from it into the Christian church in the form of the exaltation of the monastic life above any life that can be lived in the world. And Thomas Aquinas was only following out the principles of Aristotle when he exalted the

contemplative above the moral virtues, and maintained that the latter related to the former *dispositive sed non essentialiter*.[1] This transition of thought was already made easy by the religious turn of expression which Aristotle and his followers often use. It is specially marked in the *Eudemian Ethics*, where we are told that the highest life is to worship and contemplate God, *θεραπεύειν τὸν θεὸν καὶ θεωρεῖν*. Professor Burnet translates this by the familiar words: "to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever": but we must remember that for Aristotle this enjoyment consists in a pure contemplative activity, in which thought rises above all discourse of reason into unity with its object, and rests in it as its final and complete satisfaction.

The farther development of this view and the discussion of the error and truth which are mingled in it, will be the subject of the next lecture.

[1] *Summa*, S.S. 9. 180, 2.

LECTURE TWELFTH.

ARISTOTLE'S VIEW OF REASON IN ITS THEORETICAL USE.

In the last lecture I have shown that, although Aristotle regards reason as the form of man's life, he does not conceive of it as constituting a self or personality which equally manifests itself in all his feelings, thoughts and actions. In other words, he does not regard man as an organism, in which all the parts imply each other and the whole, because they are all the realisation of one principle. Rather he thinks of him as a combination of reason with an irrational element, which it cannot completely absorb or take up into itself.

But this view gives rise to a double difficulty: for, in the first place, it involves the severance of the theoretical from the practical life, of the life in which reason is purely self-determined and one with itself, from the life in which it determines a matter that is alien to itself: and, in the second place, it makes it impossible, even in the practical life, to

arrive at any clear notion of the principle of activity. At times reason seems to be represented by Aristotle as constitutive of its own motives, and, therefore, as one with will; as when he declares that "reason always chooses the best," and that "the good man is he who obeys reason."[1] But elsewhere reason is conceived as the faculty of the universal and not of the particular, a purely theoretical faculty which "moves nothing,"[2] and must be determined to action by the appetitive part of man's nature, by which alone an object or end can be prescribed as desirable. Yet Aristotle would certainly not accept the doctrine of Hume that "reason is, and ought to be, the slave of the passions"—because apart from them, it cannot choose or reject anything. The natural passions are for Aristotle immediate impulses, which are always in excess or defect, and never, except by accident, in the proper proportion in reference to the good of man's being as a whole. Having no measure in themselves, they need a measure to come to them from without; and from what can it come save reason? Aristotle seems to come near the solution of the difficulty, when he detects in man a *βούλησις* or will of the good, that is, a desire for the satisfaction of our whole being, which is quite different from the particular passions; for this is clearly a desire, the contents of which could not be derived from

[1] *Eth.*, 1169*a*, 17. [2] *Eth.*, 1139*a*, 36.

anything but reason. Nay, more, the presence of such a desire in us must be regarded as giving a new character to all the other impulses; for, in virtue of it, all the particular ends of passion must be sought not for themselves but *sub ratione boni*, as means to the complete realisation and satisfaction of the one self to which they are all related. But Aristotle does not recognise this "will of the Good" as the essential impulse of a rational nature, which underlies all its other tendencies; he seems simply to mention it as one of the elements of our being which is to be placed beside its other desires. And when he comes to ask himself what is the nature of that act of self-determination which is implied in all moral action, he does not connect it in any special way with the will of the good, but defines it simply as a 'deliberative desire,' meaning a desire accompanied by deliberation as to the means of its satisfaction—a definition which leaves desire and reason as two separate elements which are connected only externally. Nor is it by any accident or oversight that Aristotle is drawn into this circular process, in which intelligence and will presuppose each other; it is the necessary result of his conception of human nature as a σύνθετον, a combination of disparate elements. If desire be taken as separate from intelligence, intelligence can only be, what Hume makes it, an

instrument by which the means of satisfying desire is determined. Nor is it possible that any desire should be in itself rational; for, if reason be conceived as determining a motive, it seems to be leaving its own sphere and intruding into that of will, which *ex hypothesi* is closed to it. And Aristotle's final deliverance[1]—that reason is the real man, but yet that the life of reason is one which he lives not *qua* man, but as having something divine in him—only shows the perplexity to which he is reduced by the cross-currents of his thought.

Now the ultimate cause of Aristotle's defective view of the unity of the life of man lies in the fact, that he identifies reason primarily with its conscious or reflective activity, the activity which creates science and philosophy. He cannot, therefore, attribute to it, or at least to it alone, that unconscious or unreflective activity which is implied in all our ordinary experience, both theoretical and practical. Hence he is obliged to explain that experience as a sort of blend between reason and sensation or desire, which has something in it essentially non-rational. It was, indeed, the general defect of Greek thought that, while it tended to exalt reason, what it comprehended under that name was rather the reflective power of the philosopher, the

[1] *Eth.*, 1177*b*, 26 *seq.*

scientific man, and the statesman—who is like a scientific man in his mastery of the general principles of legislation and administration—rather than the self-consciousness and self-determination, which belongs equally to all men, and is, indeed, that which makes them men. Hence also Aristotle's view of the political and moral life was essentially aristocratic, though the aristocracy he recognised was not one of birth but of intelligence. Thus he regarded the Greek, with his quick perceptions and superior rational power, as a being almost of a different species from the barbarian; and he even refused to recognise the Greek artizan, who practised a 'base mechanic trade,' as fitted to discharge the functions of a citizen. The same 'intellectualism'—which made him look upon science as something that can be attained only by one who has risen above the contingency of particular facts—shows itself in his separation of the higher and more general functions of the State from the occupations of the tradesman, whose vocation is to supply the means for a life in which he does not partake. Hence, instead of the organic unity of society, we have a hierarchy in which the slaves and mechanics furnish the basis for the life of those citizens who share in the administrative, judicial and legislative work of the State and enjoy its privileges; and these in turn supply the conditions for the still higher functions of the philosopher, who

lives for contemplation alone. For contemplation is the only absolutely free activity, which never is a means to anything but itself.[1]

What, then, is the nature of this free activity, and how is it possible for Aristotle to speak of it in the terms he uses? How is it possible for him to regard science and philosophy as the purely self-determined activity of reason, an activity which is free from all the conditions to which practice is subjected? How does reason emancipate itself from the chains in which the will is bound? And, when it has so emancipated itself, what is the subject-matter with which it deals? Can the science, which abstracts from so much, still retain any real content for itself, and must it not necessarily lose itself in empty generalities? These questions are not perhaps capable of being answered in an unambiguous way, or without considerable balancing between opposite ways of understanding the language of Aristotle. But the attempt to deal with them is necessary to any one who would estimate fairly the results of his thought and the influence he had upon subsequent times, and, above all, upon the history of theology.

We may begin by guarding against a possible misunderstanding. Aristotle is by no means an empiricist, yet no one can doubt that he makes

[1] Cf. *Eth.*, X, 7.

immediate experience the starting-point of his thought; and that, indeed, he conceives of all truth as being, if not based upon such experience, yet ultimately derived from it. No one could show greater interest in collecting facts, and in testing all the theories which they had suggested to previous writers or to the ordinary consciousness of men. Aristotle made many collections of data which were relevant to his special enquiries, nor was he impatient in chronicling such data, even when he could make no immediate scientific use of them. This is equally true in relation to the structure and processes of animal life, to the varieties of ethical sentiment, to the different kinds of political organisation and to the manifold forms of philosophical opinion. Aristotle's aim is always to take as complete a view as is possible of all the phenomena relevant to the subject he is investigating. Nor can he be said to have ever neglected—as Bacon supposes him and all the ancients to have neglected—to look for negative instances. On the contrary, his first effort is invariably to seek out any appearance of disparity or contradiction between the different phenomena, or between the aspects in which they have presented themselves to different persons. His principle and his practice are at the very outset to bring to light as many such difficulties as he can discover; and he even holds that we cannot be sure that we have

reached the truth of the subject under investigation, unless we are able, by means of it, to explain not only the phenomena or opinions if they have a real basis, but also to show the reason of the mistake when they have none.[1] A principle of science is thus supposed to emerge, in the first instance at least, as the result of a synthesis of the phenomena to be explained, and as the key to all the difficulties connected therewith. And if Aristotle be not aware of the necessity of our modern methods of analysis and experiment, and sometimes is too ready to assume that he has all the necessary data without them, at any rate he cannot be accused of failing to make his inductions as complete as possible, or of theorising without an attempt to realise all the difficulties of his subject.

There is, however, another aspect of Aristotle's conception of science. All induction is with a view to deduction or demonstration, and these, for Aristotle, are two processes which are quite independent of each other. Hence, in order to deduction, we must first, by means of induction and dialectical discussion, attain to some general principle from which inferences may be drawn. Farther, all this process of discussion only gives occasion for the intuitive action

[1] *Eth.*, 1154*a*, 22. In the beginning of the 7th book of the *Ethics*, Aristotle explains this method of investigation, and examples of it may be found at the beginning of many of his works.

of reason, which grasps the principle of the subject, and perceives its self-evidencing character. We might, therefore, say that Aristotle starts from the *a posteriori* to find the *a priori*; in other words, that he begins with a view of truth as a mass of separate phenomena, which seem to be given to the mind from without, and that he regards the intellectual comprehension of these data as attained only when the mind finds *itself* in its objects, or grasps as their explanation a principle which needs no evidence but itself. The process is otherwise described by Aristotle as one in which we advance from what is first to us to that which is first in the nature of things. This regress from phenomena to their principles is, however, a preliminary process, and the proper movement of science begins with these principles and seeks to show by demonstration all that is involved in them.

Now we might at first be disposed to interpret this as meaning simply that the scientific man finds the starting-point of investigation in the immediate appearances of sense, that he soon discovers that these appearances, in the first view of them, are inconsistent and even contradictory to each other, but that, by bringing them together and comparing them, he rises to an explanation, which enables him to remove their apparent inconsistency and bring them all into agreement with each other. But this is not what Aristotle

says. He does not expect that science will ever be able to explain the particulars of sense from which it starts; for, in his view, science, as such, deals with the universal and the necessary, while the particulars of sense have in them an element of contingency which cannot be referred to any such principle. The world, indeed, is conceived by him as consisting in a multitude of individual things, in each of which some specific principle is manifested; but this specific principle is not supposed to account for all that we find in the individual things, still less for all that happens to them. It cannot in this way explain anything that results from the particular material basis in which the form of the species is realised, or from the external relations into which the particular object is brought, but only the properties that are necessarily involved in the form and can be logically proved to be so involved. And, as logical proof for Aristotle means simple deduction, it would seem to follow that a science must be made up of universal judgments, which are analytically deducible from each other. It is probable that Aristotle was misled in some degree by the example of mathematics, and that he did not realise,[1] what Kant afterwards showed, that there is a synthetical movement of thought in every step of the

[1] Professor Cook Wilson has pointed out to me that in one passage of the *Metaphysic* (1051*a*, 22 *seq.*) Aristotle seems to discern the synthetic character of mathematical proof; but this is an isolated statement.

process by which the science of mathematics is built up. It is true that he calls attention to the fact that mathematics has not to do with substances, but only with special aspects of them which are abstracted from their other aspects. And he also points out that there are many such aspects of substances, *e.g.* their motion, which may be made the subjects of special sciences. Still he seems to contemplate it as the ideal of a science, that it should be based upon the definition of a substance—a definition which expresses the form realised in such a substance—and that its demonstrations should result in the exhibition of all the *propria* which are analytically deducible from that definition.[1]

[1] Objection might be taken to the above statements, if they were intended as a complete account of Aristotle's views upon logical method. They correspond to the ideal of science which is expressed in the *Metaphysic*, Book 7. In the *Posterior Analytic* we find two other views which are not easily reconcilable either with it or with each other. In the *first* book nothing is said of substances, as such; but the general conception of demonstration is still that it is deduction of *propria* from a definition. And it is implied, I think, that this definition must express the formal cause of the subject—say, a triangle—of which the science treats. Aristotle seems mainly to be thinking of mathematics, though, as stated above, he does not apprehend the synthetic character of mathematical reasoning. In the *second* book, however, demonstration is taken as the proof of the existence of an attribute, or the occurrence of an event, through *its own* definition: and this definition may be given through the efficient, as well as the formal and final causes. Further, the cause in question is always the proximate cause, and nothing is said as to the mode in which this cause is to be connected with the definition of the subject, which in the first book

Now it is hardly necessary to say that Aristotle's actual efforts at scientific construction do not conform to this type. He is not content, in practice, to seek for some abstract principle or definition of the object in question, and then to derive everything analytically from it. What he usually does is, first, to establish by induction and dialectical reasoning some very general view of the subject of investigation, and then to distinguish different elements within it, and to endeavour, by further inductions and inferences, to determine their relations as parts of a whole which is one with itself through all its differences. He thus proceeds not from the concrete to the abstract, but from the abstract to the concrete, not by analysis and

was spoken of as supplying the middle term in scientific demonstration. Another view is suggested in the *Metaphysic* (Book 7, ch. 11 *seq.*) by the fact that Aristotle has great difficulty in determining that the definition of a substance should express only its form and not its matter. There and more definitely in his works upon the science of nature (especially *Phys.*, II, 8, and the *Part. An.*, I, 1) it is recognised that there are two lines of scientific enquiry; one, which deals with the final cause (which is shown to be one with the formal cause) and the properties deducible therefrom; and another, which deals with the necessary conditions of its realisation, and, therefore, with material and efficient causes. Matter, of course, is here taken not as the indeterminate basis of all existence of which he speaks in *Met.*, 1029*a*, 24, but as equivalent to the material constituents (in our sense) of the plants or animals. This corresponds to the view of Plato spoken of above (pp. 130, 241). I shall have to say more of it in the next chapter. In reference to these differences, I can only suggest that Aristotle forgets or modifies his general statements, when he has to deal with particular branches of science.

formal deduction, but by differentiation and integration; or, in other words, by the evolution of differences and the reconciliation of them or the discovery of their relative character. In fact, there is no other way in which scientific investigation can possibly proceed if it would lead to any profitable result. For what in all cases investigation must seek after is to exchange the vaguely determined wholes of our immediate empirical consciousness for that clear articulation and necessary connexion of the different elements or aspects of a subject, or, in other words, for that systematic completeness and unity, which we call science. If we would determine the nature of any whole, says Aristotle himself on one occasion,[1] we must divide it into its elementary parts and endeavour to define each of them separately: but, in practice at least, he is never content to conceive any real whole as the mere sum of the parts or as the resultant of their action and reaction upon each other, but seeks to discover how the relative independence of the parts is consistent with, and subordinated to, the unity of the whole. Thus in the *Politics* he regards the separate families as the elementary parts, or primitive cells, out of which the State is made up, but he is not content to treat the State as a multitude of families acting externally upon each other; rather he maintains that 'the State is prior to the family,' or in other words, that it is the

[1] *Post. An.*, 96*b*, 15.

higher ethical unity of the State, which first enables us to comprehend fully the function of the family as a constituent part of it.

But, though the actual science of Aristotle does not agree with his logical ideal, it would be a mistake to suppose that this ideal is without influence upon his philosophy. On the contrary, his logical ideal is the counterpart of his conception of individuality as involving, so to speak, a nucleus of specific determination in each individual substance, which is embedded in a mass of accidents. In other words, Aristotle sharply divides the individual as an object of sense from the universal principle which is realised in it, and which enables us to make it an object of science. He separates the individual as having a specific character from the individual as this particular being in its particular environment. Nor does it carry us much farther that in one passage in the *Metaphysics* he speaks as if there were a definite form and a definite matter for every individual,[1] so long as the form and the matter are not conceived as essentially and entirely relative to each other, that is, so long as the latter is conceived as in any sense accidental or as the source of accidents. For, so long as the separation of these two factors of reality is maintained, we are obliged to regard the true nature of the individual as consisting in that which he

[1] *Met.*, 1071*a*, 28.

is, or would be, apart from all relation to other individuals. Nor can we, on Aristotle's principles, consider this as a mere distinction of the different points of view from which we regard the individual, as, on the one hand, a separate being, and as, on the other hand, a part of a more comprehensive individuality. Aristotle, indeed, seems at times to encourage this conception, as when he tells us that an individual human being, when severed from society, is no more worthy of being called a man than a hand, when separated from the body, would be worthy of being called a hand. Are we then to say that there are different degrees of substantiality or individuality, and that a civic society is a higher kind of substance than an individual man? Could the Aristotelian philosophy allow of such a conception of substance or individuality?

There are some passages in Aristotle in which this conception is at least suggested. Thus in the seventh book of the *Metaphysics*[1] he raises the question how a substance can be defined. To define it, he argues, we must resolve it into its elements; but what can these elements be? They cannot be substances, for substances by their very nature as individuals are separated from each other, and different substances cannot be contained in one substantial unity. Yet they cannot be other than substances, for it is impossible to suppose

[1] *Met.*, VII, 13.

a substance made up of qualities or relations. It would appear, therefore, that a substance cannot be resolved into any elements at all, and, therefore, cannot be defined. Yet the substance is just that which we seek to define; indeed, it is on the definition of it that all demonstrative science is based. Aristotle ends with the promise of a further discussion of the subject, a promise which is nowhere adequately fulfilled.[1]

Yet there are passages in this chapter which seem to suggest that what from one point of view may be regarded as an individual substance or self-determined whole—say, an individual man—may from another point of view be regarded as a *res incompleta*, an imperfect individuality, when we realise his essential relation to other individuals in society.[2] If, however, Aristotle had ever entered

[1] So far as I am aware, the only attempt which he makes in this direction is in a passage already quoted (*Met.*, 1045*b*, 16) in which he speaks of form and matter as essentially correlative. This, however, could not really solve the difficulty; for, in the first place, this correlativity is not consistently maintained; and, in the second place, even if it were maintained, it would not enable us to distinguish different elements in the form. For Aristotle does not seem here to be speaking of matter in the sense of the logical genus.

[2] *Met.*, 1039*a*, 2. This seems to be involved in what he says of the principle that ἡ ἐντελέχεια χωρίζει, and that *e.g.* in the number 2, the two units exist only potentially, while they exist actually only when the units are separated from each other. This would seem to point to the only possible solution of the ἀπορία

upon his course of explanation, he would have been carried on, like Plato, from the individual to the State and from the State to the world, and he would have been able to find absolute individuality only where Plato found absolute universality, in the universe as a whole or in God as its principle. In other words, he would have been obliged to regard all other individual substances but God or the universe as imperfectly individualised, and he would have been compelled at the same time to treat the conception of the contingent or accidental as existing only from the point of view of the part. But to have done this would have been to go quite beyond the general principles which he acknowledges in all his speculations. Aristotle, indeed, as we shall see, holds that there is in God a unity which transcends and comprehends all the forms of things, a unity of the intelligible world; but he never imagined that any such unity is to be found in the world of experience.

To discover Aristotle's view of the highest kind of unity to which science can attain, we must turn

with which the chapter ends, whether a substance can be composed of substances or of elements that are not substances, both of which alternatives are impossible. It can, we may answer, be composed of substances, but these substances can exist in it only *potentially* or as elements of its higher individuality. They can exist *actually* only when this higher substance is destroyed. This seems the necessary consequence of Aristotle's reasoning, but he nowhere accepts it. Nor, indeed, could he accept it without great modifications in his theory of *οὐσίαι*.

to the *De Anima*, where he treats it mainly from the point of view of the subject of knowledge. In that treatise he discusses the position of intelligence in relation to the complex nature of man, and endeavours to explain its nature as a universal faculty which yet is subjected in its development to the conditions of man's finite life. For while, as I have stated above,[1] it is the characteristic of reason to be determined by nothing but itself, yet it cannot act or develop itself in man without the aid of sensuous perception and imagination. It must, therefore, be capable of receiving impressions, and, indeed, of receiving impressions from all the objects which can be known by it; yet, on the other hand, these impressions must not alter its own nature or do anything except to give it occasion to determine itself. How is it possible to combine such opposite conditions? To discover Aristotle's answer to this question, it is necessary to follow somewhat closely the pregnant and somewhat obscure utterances in which he sets before us his view of the rational life of man.

In the first place, he declares[2] that there is an analogy between reason and sense, in so far as both are capable of being affected, in some way, by objects, and so stimulated to apprehend them. Yet, as he contends such affection or stimulation only makes them realise what potentially they are. Hence in apprehending

[1] Pp. 292 *seq.* : 331 *seq.* [2] *De An.*, III, 4 *seq.*

their objects, sense and reason may be said to be only apprehending themselves. But there is a two-fold difference between them. For, in the first place, each sense is confined to a definite object—the ear to sound, the eye to colour, etc.—and even that object it can apprehend only within certain limits of intensity. But reason has no limit to its capacity in either of these aspects: it is capable of apprehending all objects and under all conditions. Like pure matter, it is a potentiality for all the forms of things; for it has no nature of its own which could come between it and other things or prevent it from seeing them as they are. Hence it is not going beyond itself in knowing anything else. Rather in all knowledge it is realising its own nature and so coming to a consciousness of itself. We may therefore, say that it is absolutely impassive, in so far as in no exercise of its knowing faculty is it drawn beyond itself or subjected to a foreign influence. Rather in apprehending objects it 'gains the mastery' over them, and uses them to evolve its own powers. While, therefore, the data of sense may supply the first occasion for its action, the principle of its activity is always in itself, and we have to conceive all the process of its development as one of self-determination; or, as Aristotle puts it, of the determination of the passive by the active reason. Aristotle's conception of reason,

however, as at once a universal receptivity and a pure activity, has given occasion to so much controversy that it seems desirable to quote his own words.[1]

"Here," he declares, "we have to bring in a distinction of elements or factors, which prevails throughout all nature. For in every kind of reality we find, on the one hand, a matter as the potentiality out of which it is produced, and, on the other hand, a cause or active principle which realises itself therein: and this distinction necessarily extends to the soul. There is then a reason, the characteristic of which is that it becomes everything, and a reason the characteristic of which is that it produces everything. And the latter exists as a positive source of activity,[2] like light which turns potential into actual colour. Now it is this form of reason which exists separately, unmingled and impassive, its very being consisting in its activity; for that which is active is always superior to that which is passive, and the determining principle to the matter it determines. But science, in which active reason realises itself, is one with the reality which is its object; while the potentiality of science, though prior to actual science in time in the individual, is posterior to it even in time, if we speak generally. Nor must we suppose that the active reason sometimes thinks and sometimes does

[1] *De An.*, III, 5.

[2] ὡς ἕξις τις. I think the opposition of ἕξις to στέρησις is suggested.

not think; it thinks always, though it manifests this its essential nature only when it has been separated; and it is of it alone that we can say that it is immortal and eternal. We however" (as the finite subjects in whom reason realises itself) "are liable to forgetfulness; for though the rational power which is in us cannot be affected by anything else, there is also in us a passive reason, which is capable of decay and death, and except by means of this passive reason we do not think anything."

In this chapter we can see very clearly the difficulties under which Aristotle is placed in attempting to bring together the two aspects of man's intelligence, as a universal principle which yet must be conceived as developing itself in a finite individual subject. Reason, from the former point of view, is impassive and active and it can be determined by nothing but itself. Yet at first it exists in man only as a potentiality; and as a potentiality it would seem to be exposed to influences from without, while, as a universal potentiality, it would seem to be exposed to such influences from everything. How does Aristotle unite these two apparently contradictory characteristics of it? He does so, as I have already pointed out, simply by showing that all that such influences can do is to become the occasion, not of imposing anything upon reason, or putting anything into it from without,

but only of calling out its power of determining itself. Its universal potentiality or openness to everything—which at first sight looks like emptiness, and seems to involve its being subject to every impression—is really a capacity of overpowering every such impression, and finding itself in everything. "It must therefore, since it apprehends all things, be pure and unmingled, that it may overcome all objects, that is, that it may know them."[1]

But this, again, raises the question, how objects are in the first instance given to reason? Aristotle answers that they are given to it through the perceptions of sense, and the images which are derived therefrom. But we have to remember, in the first place, that even the perceptions of sense are not for Aristotle mere impressions; for, as we have seen, objects act upon sense only to call out its own potentiality. Thus the activity of sense already strips objects of their 'sensible matter,' and apprehends only their 'sensible forms.' These sensible forms, again, which are taken up into the imagination, though they are free from the sensible matter of their objects, have still what Aristotle calls an 'intelligible matter'[2] attaching to them, in so far as they are images of objects in space and time,

[1] *De An.*, 429*a*, 19.

[2] Aristotle's conception of 'intelligible matter' has a close analogy to Kant's doctrine as to the forms of sense (cf. *Met.*, 1036*a*, 10).

and not, therefore, objects of pure thought. Thus they are not in the highest sense intelligible, though, as Aristotle maintains, we cannot think at all without them. They are the vehicles in which the forms of things are brought within the reach of our intelligence, the occasions for pure reason to exercise its faculty and to evolve its potentiality. It is in this sense, then, that Aristotle says that the development of knowledge means the determination of reason as passive or potential by reason as active. But he is obliged to add that such determination is not possible, except so far as the passive reason is already supplied with the images of sense; and that it is in these images or sensible forms, and not directly in itself, that the reason finds at first the objects or forms which are purely intelligible.[1] In this way the self-determination of the mind does not exclude its receiving its forms through the medium of sense and imagination; for, in doing so, it is not receiving into itself anything foreign, but only, as it were, recovering and recognising what is its own. All that reason has to do is to set aside or discount the intelligible matter in such images, in order to grasp its proper object, the object in which alone it can find itself.

[1] *ἐν τοῖς εἴδεσι τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς τὰ νοητά ἐστι* (*De An.*, 432*a*, 4). Our actualised knowledge for Aristotle is of the individual, which is presented in sense or imagination (cf. *Met.*, 1087*a*, 19), though we can distinguish the universal from the particular element in it.

We see, then, how it is that Aristotle could make a distinction between the active and the passive reason, and yet regard them as one. The reason of man, in his view, is identical with the absolute reason, with this difference—that the absolute reason is complete in itself, and independent of all time-process, while in man reason, at first, appears as a potentiality which can be developed only by means of the data of sense. Yet these data are merely means or occasions of its own action, and what it finds in them, or rather, we might say, extracts from them, is the pure forms which are one with its own nature. In this sense, therefore, it is never determined by anything but itself. We are not, therefore, to think of the active reason as something external to the individual, but simply as the correlate of the universal potentiality which belongs to him as a finite subject, who cannot realise himself at once, but only by a process of development. Our knowledge, as knowledge, is the manifestation of a universal principle, and yet, from another point of view, it is dependent on a sensible process, which must be stimulated from without by its appropriate objects. Thus it is limited in its evolution by the conditions of a sensitive life, from which, nevertheless, it emancipates itself in so far as it is realised. We know, indeed, as 'spectators of all time and existence,' as conscious subjects who *are* only as they

think and think as they *are*; for intelligence is the same thing in all in whom it is developed, and in every one its nature is to emancipate itself from individual conditions, and to regard things not from the point of view of a particular organism, but from the point of view of a pure subject of knowledge. Hence, while, in one sense, reason is what is most our own, in another sense it may be said to be independent of the individuality in which it is realised; for, in so far as we know, it is not our individuality which is in question, but the reason that dwells in us; and if this reason were completely realised, it would be an intelligence which no longer took any account of the particular self as a being with a determinate individual existence in space and time. It would not remember nor expect, and it would be free from all feelings of love and hate, which depend on the personal relations of this individual. Nay, we may go farther: for, as all finite individuality would drop out of view for a subject which contemplated only the forms of things in their pure ideal relations with each other, there would for it be no difference in things which would not be at once transparent, and therefore no process from one thing to another. Discourse of reason would cease in the pure intuition of truth in its unity.

This view of reason will become more intelligible, if we follow Aristotle a little farther in the contrast

he draws between pure reason and the discursive faculty which, for want of a better name, we might call the understanding. Reason, as we have seen, apprehends its objects in their intelligible forms, freed from all the images of sense. It grasps the ideal unity which is hidden from us by the sensible or intelligible matter, that is, by the manifold sensuous or imaginative elements in connexion with which they are at first presented. For it, therefore, objects are simple and indivisible, as is the act of thought wherein they are known. And, as this intuitive act is completely one with itself and does not admit of division, it excludes the possibility of error. In this activity of reason, therefore, there are no degrees of knowledge; we either know the truth altogether or we do not know it at all. In our ordinary consciousness of things, on the other hand, we have to admit the possibility of many intermediate stages between absolute ignorance and complete knowledge: for in ordinary experience we have to deal not with transparent unities in which no element can be separated from the rest, but with complex data including in themselves many disparate elements, which may be connected with each other but cannot be identified. And in forming such connexions, the discursive reason or understanding has to proceed by judgment and inference. Thus it moves from one point or *datum* to another,

without having, at least while the process lasts, any intuition of the unity of the whole. The highest result of this discursive process, however, is just to attain such an intuition; and when the intuition comes, it will make the process of thought superfluous; for the mind, to which the whole object is an indivisible unity, has no longer any need to connect the parts together by any links of argument.

In the last paragraph, I am perhaps going a little beyond the words of Aristotle, but not, I think, beyond what is implied in them. For the simplicity and indivisibility of the objects of reason cannot be taken as absolutely excluding all difference, but only as meaning that no element can be separated from the rest. We may, therefore, illustrate what Aristotle means by comparing the kind of knowledge of a science which is possessed by the learner or discoverer—for whom every new step is a surprise till it has been brought by reasoning into connexion with what is already known—with the kind of knowledge possessed by one who grasps the science as a unity in which every truth involves all the others. In this sense, the whole process of learning might be described as the process whereby discursive passes into intuitive reason; for the ideal which in all investigation we are seeking, and in which alone the scientific impulse can be satisfied, is that of a unity of knowledge which is completely

differentiated into all its parts and yet seen to be one with itself through all its differences. The great steps in the progress of thought are just those in which some new insight makes a scattered mass of observations and inferences suddenly coalesce into one indivisible body of truth.

While, however, we may fairly interpret in this way what Aristotle says of the indivisible objects of reason, we have to remember that for him these objects are not the phenomena of ordinary experience but the intelligible forms of things, and these alone. For it is only 'in things without matter' that reason finds the objects, which it can identify with itself. Hence Aristotle goes on to contrast these objects not only with sensible objects but even with all objects which possess 'intelligible matter.' Anything that has quantity—anything that occupies a part of space and time—has in it an imaginative element which is inconsistent with the pure unity of thought. A quantitative whole, indeed, may be apprehended as a unity and by one indivisible act of mind; for, though divisible, it may not be actually divided in our apprehension of it. In other words, we may take it as continuous or as discrete just as we please; and while, in the former case, the act of mind by which it is apprehended is one and indivisible, in the latter case the mental activity becomes divided

into several acts like its object. But in the case of the pure form, there is no such alternative possibility. The intelligible form, as such, is simple, and it cannot be apprehended except in one indivisible act of thought; for in the case of such a form, as we have already seen, we must either have absolute knowledge, or we must be completely ignorant.[1]

In the contrast thus drawn by Aristotle between an object quantitatively determined, and an object of pure thought, there is a measure of truth; for a quantity, as such, is not an organic whole. We may take it either in its unity with itself or in its difference, either in its continuity or in its discretion, as we please; but we cannot conceive it as an object which is one with itself in and through its difference, so long as we take it simply as a quantity. On the other hand, anyone who leaves out the quantitative aspect of things altogether, in order to reach their unity, will, so far, be making that unity empty and abstract. He will be securing unity not by synthesis, but by the omission of difference and multiplicity. And if he proceeds farther in this direction, the simplicity he attains will not be that of a whole which is indivisible—because no part of it can be conceived without the rest—but that of a bare identity,

[1] *De An.*, 430*b*, 5-20. We must however always remember that in our knowledge the *νοῦς παθητικός* is always involved, and we cannot *νοεῖν ἀνευ φαντάσματος*, though we may discount the image.

which is one with itself because it has no content at all. The exclusion of the quantitative from the unity of the pure form thus suggests a suspicion that Aristotle is seeking for unity by the way of abstraction. And this suspicion is confirmed by what he says in the immediate context,[1] in which he seems to be answering the objection that the pure forms cannot be simple because they have negatives or opposites, which are apprehended by the same act of mind whereby we grasp the forms themselves; for the knowledge of opposites is one. If this be the case, therefore, it seems impossible that the knowledge of such forms can be attained by a simple and indivisible act of mind.

Now, the true answer to this difficulty would seem to be that, as correlated factors in one conception, the positive and the negative, the form and its opposite, are apprehended in one indivisible act of thought, and that, in this sense, they constitute a simple and indivisible unity. But the answer of Aristotle appears to be not this, but that the negatives or opposites of the pure forms exist only in the phenomenal world, in the region of matter and change. Hence also the mind only apprehends the negatives or opposites of the forms along with them, in so far as it has a material or sensible basis, and, therefore, itself belongs to the world of change. But for the absolute intelligence no

[1] *De An.*, 430*b*, 20.

opposition or negation can exist. It has no connexion with matter, and, therefore, no alternative potentialities. In its pure intuitive energy it is simply positive or affirmative of itself, and has not to deal with the negative, even as a possibility.[1]

Now I will not say that such language is quite conclusive as to Aristotle's views. It is possible to take it as meaning simply that all oppositions and differences of thought are relative, and imply a unity which transcends them; and that a perfect intelligence must contemplate all things in relation to this unity. If we adopted this view, we might say that Aristotle does not dismiss negation and opposition as unreal or as not entering into the objects of reason, but simply contends that they are never to be taken as absolute negation or opposition; in other words, that they are only to be regarded as expressing the negative relation to each other of the indivisible factors of one whole. But when we consider Aristotle's general treatment of the idea of negation, and how he frequently attacks Plato for maintaining that opposites directly affect each other, it is difficult to attribute to him any such doctrine. In his whole discussion of the law of contradiction, again, he seems to lay all the emphasis upon the reciprocal exclusiveness of the affirmative and the negative; nor does he ever seem to realise the truth that, if things have no positive relation, they

[1] *De An.*, 430*b*, 24: cf. *Met.*, 1075*b*, 24.

cannot even exclude each other; for, even in order to exclusion, they must be conceived as included in some larger unity. Finally, this view of Aristotle's meaning is confirmed by the comparison which he draws[1] between the intuition by which reason apprehends the pure forms of things and the apprehension by sense of the 'special sensibles,' which also he regards as simple and indivisible, independent of all judgment or inference, and therefore exempt from the possibility of error. Aristotle fails to see that even the special sensibles cannot be apprehended without discrimination, nor, therefore, without mental process. On the other hand, even if we could conceive of something—say, a sensation of sound or colour—as given to the mind through sense, in an immediate intuition which implied no activity of thought, it would not supply any fit illustration of the intuitions of reason. For, though an intuition of reason may be called simple and indivisible, it is not in the sense of a bare unit which has no mediation, but in the sense of an organic unity, whose manifold elements are so perfectly mediated with each other that we can no longer think of any one of them except as involving, and involved in, the whole.

To sum up the result of this lecture. Our examination of the Aristotelian conception of science has shown that his separation of the theoretical from the

[1] *De An.*, 430*b*, 29 *seq.*

practical activity of reason is based upon a principle which greatly narrows his view of the former. Practice is conceived as an imperfect manifestation of reason because it deals with the particular; and, on the same grounds, practical science is regarded as less exact, and therefore of less scientific value than the other sciences. For science, in the highest sense of the word, has only to do with the definition of substances and the deduction of consequences from these definitions. It thus excludes from its consideration the accidental element which enters into the nature and the circumstances of every individual finite substance. It deals only with the universal, the pure forms of things and what is demonstrable from them. In the *De Anima* we are carried a step farther, in so far as the demonstrative process itself appears to be discounted or transcended in the idea of a pure intuition of reason. For the objects which reason grasps are, as we have seen, simple and indivisible, and their whole nature must be apprehended in a simple and indivisible act. Now, if we take this simplicity in the highest sense, it will refer not to an abstract unit or identity, but to the organic or super-organic unity of a whole, in which no part can ever be separated from the rest without losing its essential character. What, on this view, Aristotle means, is that we know a thing truly only when its diversity is completely taken up into its unity, so

that, if known at all, it must be known as in all its constituents the expression of one principle. In this sense it might without difficulty be acknowledged that the discourse of reason culminates in making way for an intuition, which completely transcends it, and renders it henceforth unnecessary. But Aristotle fails to develop his view to its consequences, and that in two ways. In the first place, he forgets to trace the necessary connexion between the discursive operations of the mind and the intuition in which they result. At least we cannot find that he calls attention to the fact that the object of the intuition is a concrete unity, which contains in itself all the elements distinguished and related by the discursive faculty, though, of course, it casts upon them a new light which greatly alters our first thoughts of them. In the second place, Aristotle's initial error in making an essential division between form and matter, or in not carrying out fully the idea that they are correlative with each other, leads to a separation of the world of experience, the world of change which is subjected to the conditions of space and time, from the world of intelligible forms which can be only apprehended by pure reason. Hence, as the unity of the intuitive reason is not reached by means of a synthesis which embraces all things in their concrete nature, but only by a synthesis of all things in their pure form without any matter,

it is a unity which is reached by abstraction from many of the aspects of reality. And it is a dialectical necessity that he who omits any element of the whole, will be driven to omit other elements connected with them, and others again connected with these, till the whole is emptied of its contents and reduced to a barren identity. Thus Aristotle, the most scientific of minds, had placed his philosophy, as it were, upon a sliding-scale, which leads ultimately to the mystical negation of all science. At the same time, we can see that the organic idea, which he never consistently applied but which never ceases in some degree to influence him, leaves the result of his philosophy somewhat ambiguous, and even makes it possible for some interpreters to maintain that he rose 'above all dualism'[1] to the conception of the world as a self-consistent system. Nay, he even seems to assert the same thing himself.[2] Before, however, we can venture to pronounce a final judgment upon this question, we must consider Aristotle's doctrine as to the nature of God and his relation to the world.

[1] See especially A. Bullinger, *Aristotle's Metaphysic* and his various other essays upon Aristotelian subjects.

[2] *Met.*, 1076*a*, 4.

LECTURE THIRTEENTH.

DOES THE PRIMACY BELONG TO REASON OR TO WILL?

In the last two lectures we have considered Aristotle's views of the practical and of the theoretical life, and the grounds on which he regards the latter as a purer and higher expression of reason than the former. Practical reason has to realise itself in a subject-matter which is not purely rational but mixed with contingency, and in which the universality of pure science is reduced to generality, and the absolute necessity of law to the hypothetical necessity of empirical fact. But the theoretical reason is free from all such limits. Its object is the universal and eternal, the forms of things apart from their matter, and as these forms are the counterpart of its own nature, it may even be said that its only object is itself. From this it follows that ethics cannot, as Plato supposed, be based upon metaphysics. Indeed, whatever connexion there is

between them lies in the opposite direction; for it is the virtues of the moral and political life that form the indispensable basis or precondition for the development and exercise of those higher qualities which are shown in the life of contemplation.

Aristotle's exaltation of theory above practice will become more intelligible if we compare it with the opposite view which is more prevalent in modern times, and which regards science as confined to the narrow sphere of a finite experience, while it finds a way to the infinite only through ideas connected with our practical life. On the whole, ancient philosophy tended towards what has been called 'intellectualism' and regarded the pure activity of reason as that in which man rises into the most intimate communion with the divine. But in modern times, especially since Kant, the trend of opinion has often been in the opposite direction, namely, to regard scientific knowledge as limited to the phenomenal world of experience, and to look to the impulses of the will or the demands of practical reason to free us from such limitations and supply us with grounds for belief in some higher reality. If we can discern the causes of this marked difference between the ancient point of view and that which has been most popular, at least in recent times, it will carry us some way toward the determination of their respective values; in other words, it will

help us to decide whether the truth lies in either of these extremes or in some higher view in which the opposition between them is transcended.

Now, we have already seen how Aristotle was led to his view of the primacy of the contemplative life. The opposite view, which has been much favoured in recent speculations on the nature of religion, finds its foremost representative in Kant. It was the aim of the *Critique of Pure Reason* to show that the objective world—the only world of which we can have scientific knowledge—is a thorough-going system of necessity, a system of objects represented as existing in space and time, and reacting upon each other according to fixed laws which are altogether independent of our will. Of this objective system we, as natural beings, are parts, and in it we find the satisfaction of our immediate impulses; but there is nothing in it or in ourselves as parts of it, which could suggest the existence of any principle either within or without or above us other than the necessity of nature, the necessity that connects all objects with each other. When, however, we reflect on the conditions of our knowledge of this world of externally related phenomena, we see that such knowledge is possible only through the unity of the self within us and by the thorough-going synthesis of phenomena according to the principles of the understanding. For, in order

that objects may exist for us, it is necessary that the intelligence should combine the data, given in sense under the forms of time and space, by the aid of the principles of causality, reciprocity, and the other principles of the understanding, so as to produce a connected experience—an experience which can be referred to one self. But this, again, leads to a further step in the analysis of knowledge; for, when we realise what is meant by this reference of experience to the unity of one self, we see that it involves certain ideas or ideals of reason, by which we are guided in applying the principles of the understanding. The conscious self in all its constructive activity—in its endeavour to construe its own life, in its endeavour to determine the connexion of outward phenomena, and finally in its effort to bring together in one both these forms of experience—is guided and stimulated by the ideas of the self, the world and God; and of each of these it thinks as a systematic whole which is absolutely one with itself through all its differences. Of these ideas it cannot get rid, yet neither is it possible for it to realise or verify them in experience. The ultimate verdict of the *Critique* in relation to them is, therefore, an open one. To reason in its theoretical use, they must always remain problematical, that is, they must remain ideals which it can and must aim at in the development of its

knowledge, but which it can neither assert nor deny to be real. They are, as it were, dark lanterns which illumine the object but not themselves, which throw light upon experience and enable us to detect its phenomenal character, yet without revealing anything as to the existence of real objects corresponding to themselves. If we have any right to believe in the existence of any such objects, it must be not upon theoretical grounds, but in virtue of some practical necessity to affirm their reality.

Now, such a practical necessity is found in the moral law which, as it issues unconditioned commands, compels us to believe in our own freedom. And the idea of an intelligible world is just the conception on which we must take our stand, in order to think of ourselves as self-determining beings,[1] or to refer our own actions to ourselves as their origin and cause. Thus while the theoretical reason forced us to deny that the *ego* is under the law of necessity, which applies only to its objects, the practical reason reveals to us that we are under the law of freedom, or, in other words, that in all our action we are determined only by ourselves. But what is this law of freedom? It is the counterpart of the ideas of reason; for these are all reducible to different applications of the conception

[1] *Metaph. der Sitten*, III, "Von der aüssersten Grenze aller practischen Philosophie."

of self-consistent or systematic unity. To say that a rational being, as such, is under the law of freedom means, therefore, that in all its actions it must be consistent with itself, and that this consistency must be its sole motive.

Now, if we free this idea from the ambiguity which attaches to Kant's different expressions of it—as bare logical consistency, as consistency with the self, and as consistency with the idea of a possible kingdom of ends[1]—what he seems to mean is that a moral life is one which in all its acts is in perfect organic unity with itself. Further, as the unity of the self is a principle to which all the intelligible world is relative, the moral law not only demands the systematic unity of the life of the individual, but postulates the idea of a system of the universe in which all the ideas of reason are realised, and all things are brought into unity with each other and with the intelligence. In other words, it postulates not only the freedom of the individual, but the conformity of all the conditions of his life to such freedom: or, as Kant puts it, it postulates both the immortality of the soul to work out its infinite task, and the existence of God as the ultimate principle of unity by which the order of the material world is conformed to the demands of self-

[1] The main defects of Kant's view arise, as I have tried to show elsewhere (*Critical Philosophy of Kant*, II, p. 218), from his following out the first of these formulas to the exclusion of the other two.

determining reason, and happiness is bound up with goodness.

The general result of Kant's doctrine, then, is that, while there is nothing in the objective world, viewed simply in itself, to raise our thoughts above the necessity of nature, we find in our practical consciousness a sufficient warrant for the belief in our own freedom and in the existence of a spiritual Being like ourselves, who is the ultimate principle of all reality, and through whom, therefore, all reality is determined in conformity with the demands of our spirits. This Being we cannot, indeed, know, as we know the objects of ordinary experience, but the *thought* of him is bound up with the consciousness of self and with all the experience which the unity of the self makes possible; and the *belief* in him is implied in our consciousness of the law that gives order and direction to our practical life. In this case, and in this case alone, can we vindicate our right to believe what we *will to believe*, but cannot know; and the limitations which science cannot transcend are set aside by the imperative voice of duty, which compels us to think of the universe as ordered in conformity with itself.

Such, in outline, is the Kantian theory of the relation of our ordinary experience—our immediate consciousness of the world and ourselves—to that higher idea of both which is presupposed by morality

and religion. And we find the same theory repeated with modifications by many writers in the present day, who, without adhering closely to Kantian principles, adopt his general conception of the limits of knowledge. To such writers science seems to be confined to the task of tracing out the lines of natural necessity by which one phenomenon, or phase of existence, is bound to another; and the possibility of escape from this iron circle of causation is supposed to be opened up by the revolt of human hearts against it. Thus the feeling of inconsistency between the conditions of finite existence and the obligations laid upon us by our spiritual nature, the demand of the soul for a good more complete and enduring than any of the changing objects of sense, or the aspiration after an ideal beauty which is never adequately realised in the world—are regarded as a sufficient warrant for casting aside the ordinary tests of credibility and basing belief upon the *will to believe*. In many different ways the will, or the heart, or the imagination, is supposed to emancipate us from the limitations of sense and experience, and to put us in relation to ends and objects which cannot be brought within the scope of science.

Now it is easy to see that the two theories or classes of theories, represented by Aristotle and Kant, are diametrically opposed to each other, and it is instructive to draw out the points of contrast between them. With Kant science is confined to the discovery

of the laws which determine the co-existence and succession of objects and events in the finite world of experience, and it is only through the moral consciousness and the practical faith which that consciousness brings with it that we escape from the limits of this system of necessity, and rise to the idea of a spiritual God who rules over a free kingdom of spiritual beings. With Aristotle, on the other hand, moral practice is the hampered activity of reason, working with a matter which can never be perfectly subdued or determined by it, exercising itself in a medium which is exposed to the inroads of a necessity that comes not from within but from without, not from itself, but from nature and circumstance; while it is science which emancipates reason from this foreign yoke, and raises it to a consciousness of all things in their ideal principles, which is also a consciousness of their unity with the mind that knows them: for, as Aristotle says, in the case of things without matter, the knower and the known are one. Thus it is only the mind which sees the essential forms of things—their final or formal causes—that can attain to the full consciousness and realisation of itself. Putting this contrast in a slightly different way, Kant holds that knowledge can grasp only the external conditions of things, while it is the faith that goes with the moral consciousness which alone can give us insight into the final causes, the ultimate forms of reality, the spiritual principles upon

which the universe is based. Aristotle, on the other hand, looks upon practice as a continual struggle with external necessity, while he thinks of θεωρία, philosophical contemplation, as the free converse of the mind with itself, the activity of unimpeded reason, which is at the same time the revelation of the nature of God and of the immanent purpose of the universe. In both cases, therefore, we have, on the one side, an immediate view of the world as a region of accidental co-existence and external necessity, and, on the other side, a deeper view of it as the manifestation of a spiritual principle, as an organic whole in which an ideal design is ever realising itself. But the difference is that the principles to which the two views are referred change places, and the higher religious and philosophical consciousness is in the one case associated with practice and in the other with theory.

Now this comparison is very instructive, whether we look at the points in which the two views agree or at those in which they differ. Looking first at the points of agreement, we see that they both start with the presupposition of a certain irrational or non-rational element in things which cannot be explained, though in the case of Aristotle this element is taken as objective, and in the case of Kant as subjective. Thus Aristotle presupposes that there is in the world a substratum of matter, which makes it impossible that formal or final causes should

be perfectly realised, and which obliges us to explain many things by an external necessity, which is closely allied with contingency, or, at least, leaves much room for it. In like manner, *mutatis mutandis* Kant bases our experience upon data of sense, of which we can say nothing, except that so they are given. Our mind, indeed, by the aid of principles derived from itself can reduce these data into a fixed and necessary order, and so can construct out of them a world of experience. But it cannot make this world wholly intelligible; it cannot bring it into agreement with the ideas of reason which are bound up with its consciousness of itself. Thus in both philosophies the immediate world of experience is conceived as one in which we continually encounter contingency or external necessity, and it is by abstraction from that world, or rather from the irrational element in it, that we are supposed to attain to the consciousness of an intelligible reality, which is determined only by idea or spiritual principles of connexion. These principles, however, are to Kant only objects of a practical faith which science cannot verify; while, to Aristotle, they are the supreme objects of science, and, indeed, if we take the word science in its strictest sense, they are the only objects of science.

Now there is a plausible explanation of this difference of view which many moderns would be ready to give. It is that Aristotle is still entangled

in the illusive search for formal or final causes which belongs to the metaphysical stage of thought. He has not yet discovered what later philosophers were to discover—that that search is hopeless, and that all we can do is to observe the qualities of things as they present themselves, to determine their quantitative relations, and to find out the laws that govern their co-existence and succession. To attempt anything more is to go beyond the possibility of science; it is to substitute anthropomorphic fancies for the truths which we are able to ascertain by scientific methods. When we think we discover design in nature, what we see is not her real lineaments, but the reflexion of our own faces. If we can attain to more than this, the grounds of our belief must be not objective but subjective, not derived from scientific scrutiny of the world without, but by listening to some voice that speaks within us. If, therefore, we have any right to a faith that there is in nature a principle kindred in some way to our own spirits, and that this principle is the real cause or substance of the world without us, we must find its ground simply in this—that, as Kant showed, we cannot be true to ourselves or live in accordance with the law of our own rational being without presupposing or postulating such a principle. Hence modern philosophy must speak with a humbler voice than the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. It must not pretend to determine scientifically the

highest principles of reality. It must be content if it can find grounds for a rational faith that, behind the phenomenal veil which hides the truth of things from us, there is a divine reality which corresponds to the highest needs of our souls. For us, in this region of appearance, the true can never be coincident with the good; but our souls refuse to believe in their ultimate discord, and this refusal is itself a sufficient evidence that, if we could see the whole truth, we should find that they coincide.

It may, however, as I think, be shown that there is a better way out of the difficulty. The sharp antithesis between the phenomenal and the real or intelligible worlds which is common to Aristotle and Kant—whether it be conceived with the former as a contrast between the sphere of opinion and that of science, or with the latter as a contrast between the sphere of science and that of faith—is the result of a false abstraction. There is no phenomenal world, no world in which reality is veiled from us by a material or irrational element. The only distinction is between the world as imperfectly conceived and the world as more adequately interpreted. Nor is it true in regard to *any* object that the utmost science can attain is to find out the external relations of co-existence or succession, in which it stands to other objects. It is, indeed, true that this kind of explanation is the primary

work of science, and that, as I have said in a previous lecture, neither Plato nor Aristotle had an adequate perception of the difficulty and extent of this work. It is also true that the higher teleological view of nature cannot be reached, except in so far as this humbler work of science has been achieved. But it is impossible to admit the abstract contrast between mechanism and teleology in the sense in which it has often been maintained. For, in the first place, recent times have seen a new attempt to use the conceptions of organism and organic evolution in the explanation of the phenomena of nature and, particularly, of the phenomena of the life of plants and animals. But any application of such categories to natural beings involves that the kingdom of nature is not cut off by any sharp line of division from the kingdom of spirit; but that there are in nature indications of the same upward movement towards an ideal end, which is continued in a higher form in the moral effort of the human will to attain an absolute good. In this sense, modern thought has recognised the same fact which Aristotle half-poetically expresses when he speaks of a 'will of nature,' which reaches beyond the particular impulses of the animals and seeks for the preservation of the individual and the species. Even Kant himself acknowledges that it is necessary to use teleological ideas in dealing with living things;

though he treats this use as merely 'heuristic,' *i.e.* as supplying a necessary point of view from which we must carry on our scientific investigations, but not as enabling us to attach any real predicates to such beings as objects. But the division between such a provisional hypothesis or postulate of science and its recognised truth is not easy to maintain—as is shown by the speculations of many of our modern biologists, whose general repudiation of teleological speculations does not prevent them from continually in detail making use of the idea of purpose, whenever it is necessary to explain any special modification of structure or function that seems to conduce to the preservation of the individual or the species.

We ought not, however, to make too much of such concessions. For it must be allowed that the main work of science has been to follow out the lines of external connexion between phenomena, and that, even in regard to the organic world, it generally pursues the same method to the same result. Even, therefore, if in this region it cannot altogether banish the idea of final causes, yet it keeps that thought as far as possible in the background; and it treats all the phenomena with which it deals as the necessary results of the action and reaction of elements which are not themselves subordinated to any pervading unity. And the Darwinian theory, many as are the applications of the idea of purpose to which

it has led, is itself an attempt to carry the idea of an external necessity, resulting from the relations of the organism and the environment, into the explanation of those very phenomena which were once thought to be the clearest evidences of design.

But, in the second place, there is a better way of proving the limited and provisional character of the ordinary scientific view of nature, as a system of external necessity; and Kant himself, though he maintained that view, and indeed, gave it a fuller and more distinctive philosophical expression than anyone before him, was also the first to supply the conclusive means of refuting it. For, while he treated the world of experience as a system of objects—which are external to each other in space, and pass through successive phases in time, according to necessary laws of coexistence and succession—he showed also that this world of necessity stands in essential relation to the unity of the self that knows it. Hence, any explanation of the world, or of any object in it, which does not take account of this relation, must be regarded as abstract and imperfect. Thus the external necessity which characterises the objective world when we regard it as complete in itself (as it is generally regarded by science), must receive a new interpretation when we recognise that it cannot be separated from the

unity of the intelligence. When we rise above the abstractions of the ordinary consciousness and of science, and take a complete or concrete view of the facts, we see that this external necessity never exists apart from an identity which manifests itself in it and controls it. This identity beyond difference, indeed, was recognised by Kant only in the form of an ideal of reason which cannot be realised in experience, or, in his language, of a regulative idea, which cannot be treated as constitutive. But this view implies an imperfect conception of the unity of self-consciousness, and is quite inconsistent with Kant's own conception of the relativity of objects to that unity. For, if the object in its externality be an abstraction which requires an ideal principle of identity to complete it—if, in other words, the object always has a subjective unity underlying all its differences—we can no longer admit that Kant's categories of the understanding are the highest principles we can apply to the contents of our experience. If, therefore, the special sciences confine themselves to explaining the connexion of phenomena by the external relations of causality and reciprocity, this proves nothing in regard to the limits of knowledge. It proves only that such sciences are not able to speak the last word as to the nature of the objects with which they deal. For, in order to speak that last word, we must regard the world—and everything

in it to which we attribute any independent reality—not as an external combination of elements, acting and reacting on each other, but as a unity which is one with itself through all its differences. While, therefore, it may be legitimate for the purposes of science to bring all phenomena under the form of necessity, it is obvious that this is a provisional way of regarding them, and that it cannot furnish us with any ultimate conception of reality. "The truth of necessity is freedom or self-determination," in the sense that whatever claims to be real must be an individual, and that no object is individual except in so far as it is an organic whole which has its principle of unity in itself.

The result of this line of thought, then, is to break down the abstract opposition which Kant set up—between the object and the subject, between the world known and the self that knows it—by the discovery, in the object, of that unity which was supposed to characterise the subject. But with this we have also to break down the opposition between the theoretical and the practical life: for the relativity of subject and object, self and not-self, must be accepted in both its aspects; and if the object cannot be severed from the unity of the self, neither can the unity of the self be severed from the multiplicity and externality of the object. Now Kant, as we have seen, supposed that reason, in its practical

exercise, carries with it an ideal of freedom or self-determination, which sets it in abstract opposition to the objective world as a system of necessity. This also causes it to condemn that world as phenomenal, and to look beyond it to an intelligible world, in which all things are determined according to the law of liberty, and to a divine intelligence which orders all things according to that law. But one of the necessary presuppositions of this view has already disappeared when we have rejected the conception of the objective world as a world of necessity. And the other necessary presupposition must also disappear, when we recognise that the subjective unity of self-consciousness cannot be severed from the objective consciousness of the world in space and time. The relativity of object and subject to each other implies that the unity of the intelligence must be found also in the object; but it also implies that the intelligence or conscious self, in seeking to realise itself in the object, is only bringing to light what the true nature of the object is. Hence, we cannot suppose that the aspirations of the soul or the obligations of the will can carry us into a new region absolutely separated from that phenomenal world, which is the object of our knowledge. On the contrary, the practical must be viewed as continuous with the theoretical life, and it must be recognised that, if the former goes farther than the latter,

it is still on the same road. The good cannot be opposed to the true; for they are only different aspects of the relation of the same self to the same all-embracing whole, in which the self finds its objective counterpart. Thus the contrast of knowing and willing cannot be treated as an absolute one, so soon as we discern that in knowing we are coming to the consciousness of self as well as of the objective world, and that in action we are realising an end which is involved in the nature of the world as well as in our own nature. It is true that in both cases, in knowledge as in action, the universality of the principle that manifests itself in our lives is at first hidden from us by the conditions of its progressive manifestation. What we know seems to be only the particular things with which our senses bring us into contact; what we will seems to be only the particular objects which excite our desires. We do not reflect that all known objects already have taken their place in the one world to which all that is knowable by the one self must belong; nor that all objects of desire must be sought *sub ratione boni*, as the satisfaction of a self which, as it is a unity to which all ends are related, cannot be satisfied with anything but the whole. Thus through all the stages of their development, the theoretical and the practical consciousness are actuated by the same principles, and have to contest with the same difficulties;

nor is it possible to separate the one from the other without mutilating both.

We may put this point in a more palpable way, if we consider that the opposition of practical to theoretical reason, which Kant maintains, resolves itself into an opposition of that which ought to be to that which is. The good is an 'ought-to-be' of reason, which never is realised in the phenomenal world. But, if the above criticisms have any value, this opposition must be broken down on both sides. For, on the one hand, the real, which is the object of knowledge, cannot be regarded as a dead reality which exists apart from any movement in itself or in the intelligence which apprehends it, but only as the expression of an absolute intelligence which reveals itself both in the object and in the mind. Nor, on the other hand, can the good be taken as mere ideal, an 'ought-to-be,' which is present to our minds but has no necessity of realisation; for, as the good of a self, it has in itself a principle to which all knowable objects are related. Hence it is realised, or is realising itself, in all things, even in those which seem most to hinder its realisation. It is impossible to sever the absoluteness of the moral law, upon which Kant so strongly insists, from the idea that "morality is the nature of things": in other words, that it is a principle which is realising itself in the objective world.

Thus also morality passes into religion, not as with Kant by the external postulate of a *Deus ex machina* who shall bind together goodness with happiness, or the spiritual with the natural world, but by the recognition that there is one principle underlying both. For the very essence of religion lies in the consciousness that what we have presented to us in the objective world is not a foreign necessity, which has no relation, or only an accidental relation to our will, but rather an environment which is the necessary condition of its exercise; and, conversely, that what we seek as the highest in our practical life, is not a mere subjective end, to which we try to subordinate all that is without us. Rather that it is one and the same end which is revealed both within and without, in the order of nature and history and in the wants and aspirations of our spirits. Our theoretical and our practical consciousness are thus in continuity with each other. We have not in the one the determination of the self by an objective world which is independent of us and our desires, succeeded in the other by the unavailing, or only partly successful, effort to subdue such objects to our will. We discern that, in knowledge, we are active as well as passive; and that, in practice, we are passive as well as active. Or, more properly, we discern that the opposition of activity and passivity does not hold good, when

we are attempting to describe the relations of spiritual beings, who are members of the great organic whole of the universe, to that divine Spirit which is the principle of that whole. Rather we are obliged to say that these members are active, because, and just so far as, the principle of the whole is active in them.

It appears, then, that there is an essential fallacy in the Kantian attempt to confine science to the sphere of phenomenal objects which are connected together only by an external necessity, and to refer all our higher consciousness of reality, whether religious or philosophical, to the demands of practical reason. But the same criticism applies also to the opposite view of Aristotle, that it is the practical reason which is immersed in the phenomenal world—in the world of external necessity and contingency of which science in the strict sense of the term is impossible; while it is the theoretical reason which alone is able to grasp things in their essential nature, and to follow out the inner necessity by which all their attributes are connected; and, above all, it is the theoretical reason alone that can rise to the contemplation of God as the principle of all reality, the first and the final cause of the universe. We must, I think, recognise that in this view also there is an unhappy divorce between the two sides of man's life; and that his higher or religious consciousness can no

more be conceived as abstractly theoretical than it can be conceived as abstractly practical. The idea that science is concerned only with deducing the nature of things from their essential definitions—from the formal or final cause of their being—is as one-sided as the Kantian conception that it has to do only with measuring the phenomena as they are given, and determining the external conditions of their co-existence or succession. For neither of these is possible without the other. A teleology that takes no account of mechanism is as imperfect as a mechanical philosophy that takes no account of teleology. The latter, indeed, is less of an illusion; for a science that deals with efficient, and not with formal or final causes, is a true science so far as it goes. It enables us to find order in the world, though it may be only an external order. It thus lays the true foundation for a systematic view of things, even though it may not be able to give to that view the highest kind of unity. It exhibits to us the anatomical structure and mechanical relations of the parts of the body, though it is not able to detect the secret of its life. On the other hand, as the work of the Scholastics often showed, the attempt to deal directly and immediately with formal and final causes, is apt to lead to a philosophy of foregone conclusions, which stereotypes our first notions of things, and attempts, by merely analysing these notions, to add to our knowledge of their objects.

So understood, the demonstrative syllogism of Aristotle becomes a mere formal exercise of thought which can only bring out in the conclusion what has been assumed, and even explicitly assumed in the premises.

We cannot, indeed, attribute such a notion of science to Aristotle; for as I have shown in an earlier lecture, his definitions were not mere reproductions of popular notions, but were reached by an inductive and dialectical process which is closely analogous to the methods of modern science. At the same time, we have to recognise that there were defects in Aristotle's logic which gave too much encouragement to the Scholastic interpretation of it. In the first place, he assumed that by a direct process of induction it is possible at once to rise to an explanation of nature by formal or final causes. Thus he thought it possible to solve the whole problem of science at one stroke, and did not recognise that we must use lower categories before we proceed to higher categories; in other words, that we must connect the phenomena with which we are dealing in an external way as causes and effects of each other, before we can safely attempt to grasp their essential individuality and the organic relations by which they are bound to each other and to the mind that knows them. It is true that besides the science that demonstrates the properties of substances through their essential definition, Aristotle also refers to a kind of science which has to determine

the causes of particular events, such, for instance, as an eclipse. Like Plato, therefore, he recognises that the external or mechanical action of substances upon each other is worthy of investigation as well as the formal or teleological principles that are realised in them. And, especially in his biological works, he carries the investigation of the necessary conditions, without which the ends of nature cannot be achieved, to a point far beyond the imaginary physics of the *Timaeus*. But such enquiries into 'second causes' do not, in his view of science, take the important place which has been given to them in modern times; still less does he suppose that they precede and condition the higher kind of knowledge which deals with the essential forms of things.[1]

[1] In one sense we might say that for Aristotle the sole ἀναγκαῖον, the sole condition *sine qua non*, of the realisation of the ends of nature is matter. But, in his special enquiries, matter is never taken in the sense of the ultimate indeterminate ὕλη, but always as the specialised matter which is necessary for a particular purpose, *e.g.* in the life of an animal or a plant. Hence the investigation of material causes is really an enquiry into the special actions and reactions of the elements of such specialised matter upon each other or upon the environment—in other words, it is an enquiry into efficient causes. We have, however, to observe that efficient cause is taken by Aristotle in two quite different senses. In the *Metaphysic*, the efficient cause generally means a substance which exists prior in time to the effect, and has the same forms realised in it as in the effect. (Cf. *Met.*, 1032*a*, 25, where Aristotle refers to his usual example: ἄνθρωπος γὰρ ἄνθρωπον γεννᾷ.) In other cases the term efficient cause is used by Aristotle in the modern sense, as meaning the conditions of an effect, which, as Aristotle also observes, do *not* precede it in time (*An. Post.*, 95*a*, 22).

In the second place, as I tried to show in the last lecture, Aristotle, almost in spite of himself, is forced by his doctrine as to matter to recognise an essential opposition between the universal and the particular. Hence no science seems to him exact except as it approximates to the type of mathematics. He saw, indeed, that the exactness of mathematical science rests upon abstraction, but he did not discern that the same defect of abstractness would attach to any attempt to determine individual substances apart from each other, and he even seemed to adopt the principle that the highest substance is that which is most simple. Hence, in what he supposed to be the absolutely regular movement of the heavens he saw a higher manifestation of intelligence than in the confused and complex motions of earthly things and beings. In this there is obviously manifested the influence of a false ideal of knowledge; for, even if we conceived the stellar motions as he did, that is to say, as circular motions absolutely continuous and regular, or only irregular in so far as many spheres are concerned in the movement of one body, this absence of complexity would seem to us to involve that there is less, and not more, need for a spiritual principle to explain them. In both cases, however, in astronomy as in mathematics, we are really dealing with what is general and abstract—with aspects of the existence of material objects, the exactness of our knowledge

of which is dependent on the fact, that we consciously omit, or unconsciously neglect, their relations to other parts or elements of reality. In like manner, the comparative exactness of physical science in general is at least partly due to the fact that we regard its objects merely as material things, and omit altogether to take into account their relations to life and mind. Hence, though this kind of exactness seems to diminish as we rise in the scale of the sciences from physics to chemistry, from chemistry to biology, from biology to psychology, this does not mean that we are passing from that which is more to that which is less intelligible; rather it means the reverse of this. It means that we are bringing our science nearer and nearer to the complex whole to which these abstracted elements belong, and, therefore, are leaving less and less to take its place with the accidental or inexplicable.

It is true that, as we advance, just because we are leaving the region of the abstract, we are brought into contact with greater difficulties. The unexplained remainder, that is, the numerous objects and events which, after all that the special sciences can do, are still incompletely accounted for—all this apparently accidental element in life does not press itself upon our notice, while we are dealing with the abstractions of mathematics, or with what we may call the natural abstraction of the motions of the heavenly bodies. Even in physics and chemistry we are not much

troubled with the consciousness of it, because in these sciences we are satisfied with finding the causes or conditions of the particular phenomena, and are not embarrassed by the thought of any general purpose or teleological unity that binds all the particular phenomena together as elements in one whole. But biology brings with it the conceptions of organic unity and evolution; it exhibits to us, in the plant and still more in the animal, a whole the parts of which are means and ends to each other. Here, therefore, we begin to be embarrassed by the fact that the purposes of the individual life and of the life of the species are so often thwarted and interfered with by what seem to be external accidents; or, in other words, that the environment is so often at war with the life instead of subserving it. And when we come to the spiritual life of man, with its still higher purposes and its deeper teleological unity, we are still more disturbed by what seems the frequent defeat of rational order by external accidents—by the catastrophe of individual lives that seemed to contain so high promise in them, by the way in which the course of social progress is so often stopped or turned back, and by that mixture of success and failure in the attainment of good, which renders it so difficult to discover any general meaning in human history. Thus in the moral sciences we are continually dealing with the struggle of the will of man to remould nature, and, we may add, his own

natural life, in conformity with his spiritual needs; and these two sides of our existence, by their co-existence and interference with each other, by their partial agreement and yet frequent collision, at once tend to awaken in our minds the idea of a rational plan and purpose, and at the same time to oppress us with a consciousness of its imperfect realisation. It is thus that the practical life of man appears to be the peculiar sphere of accident and caprice, just because it forces upon us the conception of a universal system of reason which would not admit any accident or caprice at all.

All this might make us inclined to accept the Aristotelian notion that ethics is the science in which least exactness is to be expected, and that it is excluded altogether from that sphere of demonstration in which reason finds its highest exercise. In truth, however, such a view rests upon an illusion. The inorganic world taken by itself—including the heavenly bodies, which the Greeks deified, and even Aristotle and Plato treated as free from all imperfection and accident—is the sphere of an external necessity which, as Aristotle discerned, is closely connected with contingency.[1] It is in the organic world,

[1] In *Met.*, VI, 3, Aristotle seems to come very near to the modern idea that, in the endless series of efficient causes we must stop somewhere, and that the necessity of this arbitrary stop forces us to regard the whole series as contingent. But Aristotle does not definitely say this. Elsewhere he seems to take as contingent

and still more in man's moral life, and in the subjection of nature to the higher ends of that life, that purpose or design begins clearly to manifest itself. Here, therefore, we have the first lifting of the veil of contingency from nature; and it is natural, as I have already suggested, that this partial revelation should awaken the desire for a more complete manifestation of spiritual law in the natural world. In ethics, therefore, we are vexed with an antagonism of principles which, without going beyond the sphere of our science, we cannot finally solve. But it is the peculiar task of philosophy, following out the forecast of religion, to develop that idealistic view of the world which supplies the only possible key to such difficulties, and enables us to see that the principle of nature and the principle of man's higher life are one, and that it is an imperfect interpretation of the facts which regards them as coming into collision with each other. In other words, it is *its* business to raise the intuitive certitude of religion—its unreflecting faith in goodness and God—into the clear reflective consciousness that the world is an organic system, the principle of which is spiritual.

But it is impossible that philosophy should attain to such an interpretation of things, as it has too often tried to attain to it, by the way of abstraction, by

whatever cannot be traced to the operation of formal, final, or even efficient causes. Cf. Vol. I, p. 325 note.

turning away from the difficulties of the special sciences, and especially from the difficulties that beset us in the explanation of the practical life of man. On the contrary, it can solve them, or approximate in any measure to the solution of them, only by taking a more comprehensive and complete view of the facts than is possible in any of the special sciences. And, as it is an imperfect religion which withdraws itself from any of the concrete interests of life—from art or literature, from trade or politics—and seeks to escape from their manifold difficulties and dangers by occupying itself only with what are technically called 'religious interests,' and, as it were, hiding itself in the sanctuary: so it is an imperfect philosophy which finds the highest truth in a pure contemplation, which confines itself to the most general ideas, and throws no new light upon the results of natural or ethical science. Philosophy must, indeed, change our ordinary, and even our scientific views of reality; it must give a new meaning to life: but it can do so only as it re-interprets our common experience, and shows us that the world we live in, here and now, is a spiritual world.

The general result to which our argument brings us is that neither the theoretical nor the practical life can be viewed as the exclusive source of that higher consciousness which is manifested in religion and philosophy. Aristotle's exaltation of pure contemplation and Kant's exaltation of practical reason equally

rest upon a false abstraction. To say, with the latter, that we can think and believe what we cannot know is arbitrarily to confine our knowledge of the objective world to lower categories than those which we apply to the inner life of the conscious self, and to forget that the consciousness of the self cannot be severed from the consciousness of the world. To say, with Aristotle, that we can know that which is universal and eternal, but that we cannot, in the full sense of the word, know that which is particular and temporal, is to suppose that we reach the highest reality by abstraction, and to forget that the ultimate truth must be that which is most complex and concrete, as it is that in which all other truth reaches its completion. We cannot find an ultimate principle of unity either in the subject as separated from the object or in the object as separated from the subject, since it is only in rising above this division that we have any apprehension of such a principle. Hence, also, any exclusive emphasis on the theoretical or the practical consciousness must tend to empty the consciousness of God of its peculiar meaning and content. If, therefore, there be any sense in which the religious consciousness may be regarded as contemplative, it is not as excluding, but as at once including and transcending the practical consciousness. Whether there is any trace of such a view in Aristotle, we shall have to consider in the next lecture.

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in the

Greek Philosophers

The Gifford Lectures
delivered in the University of Glasgow in
Sessions 1900-1 *and* 1901-2

By Edward Caird
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LECTURE FOURTEENTH.

THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE ARISTOTELIAN PHILOSOPHY.

In the last lecture I sought to illustrate the doctrine of Aristotle that contemplation is higher than action, and that it is through the former alone that we enter into conscious relation with the divine, by contrasting it with the opposite doctrine of Kant and his disciples, that it is only the postulates of practical reason, the beliefs which are bound up with the consciousness of duty, which free us from the narrow limits of scientific knowledge and cast some light upon the higher destinies of man. And I endeavoured to show that both these doctrines have to be set aside as involving a false abstraction, an attempt to separate elements which are necessarily connected, similar to that which brought condemnation upon the so-called 'faculty psychology.' For the severance of the will from the reason, in whatever sense it may be interpreted, involves a disruption

of the organic unity of man's life, and ultimately deprives the factor which is thus disjoined of all its meaning and content.

While, however, this criticism obliges us to condemn equally both the extreme views, it at the same time shows that there is a certain ambiguity in the doctrine that contemplation is higher than action. If we take that doctrine in the sense criticised, namely, in the sense in which the contemplative life excludes the practical, we are obliged to regard it as one-sided and abstract; but it might be taken to mean something very different from this. It might be taken to mean that there is a contemplative consciousness, which may take either a philosophical or a religious form, and in which we are lifted above all the oppositions that affect our natural life, and, in particular, above the opposition of theory and practice. That opposition, indeed, is one that rests on an imperfect view both of the theoretical and the practical consciousness. On the one hand, knowledge cannot be regarded simply as the revelation of an object which is independent of our subjectivity. The bond of object to subject is one that cannot be severed; and if in science we break through the veil of appearances, and so bring to light the reality beneath them, we are at the same time freeing the self from the imperfections of the first form of its consciousness. In penetrating to

the reality of things, the subject is also discovering his own true nature. And the converse holds good of the practical life. The process by which the subject seeks to realise his will in the objective world, cannot be regarded as a mere imposition of that will upon something which is extraneous and indifferent to it. On the contrary, the subject can do nothing and attain nothing except in conformity with the nature of the object on which he acts; and his realisation of himself in it must be a manifestation of that nature as well as of his own. Hence the moral world which is built up by the action of men is no mere product of their particular subjectivity, but must be regarded as a further realisation of the same principle which reveals itself in the natural world. Thus both the theoretical and the practical consciousness point back to a unity which manifests itself in all the relations of the subject to the objective world, in its action upon him and in his action upon it. And both theory and practice find their completion in a higher consciousness which is primarily directed to this unity.

Now, it is the essential characteristic of religion that it awakes and develops this consciousness, and makes it the dominating factor both in our theoretical and in our practical life. In other words, religion teaches us to recognise that the ultimate reality,

which knowledge seeks beyond the veil of phenomena, lies in a Being who speaks not only to us but in us; and, on the other hand, that the realisation of the highest end of our will is possible only as that will becomes the organ and vehicle of a divine purpose which is realising itself in the world. Thus to the religious spirit it is no longer the last word of truth that the world acts upon us or that we react upon the world; but rather that God, the ultimate principle of the whole in which both are included, acts in and through both, to make all their agency, whether in conflict or co-operation, the means of realising himself. This, it should be remarked, does not involve any denial of the reality either of the subject or of the object, or the reduction of them to mere appearances. On the contrary, it is only through the relative independence and even conflict of the two terms that the original principle of unity can reveal itself, and without them it would be empty and meaningless. Still, the whole conception of our finite life and of all the discords and antagonisms it displays—especially of this highest antagonism between object and subject—becomes changed and even transformed by the new light thrown upon it, when we realise that in their utmost separation and warfare they cannot break away from the divine principle which holds them together and manifests itself in both.

Thus the central thought of religion is of a peace that is beyond the unrest of life, of a harmony that transcends all its discords, of a unity of purpose which works through all the conflict of the forces of nature and the still more intense conflict of the wills of men.

If we take it in this way, we can find a meaning for the assertion that the contemplative is higher than the practical life which will not imply a false exaltation of thought, as such, above action. For what, on this construction of it, the assertion means, is that we can rise above the one-sidedness of practical endeavour, above the endeavour to "work out our own salvation," to the consciousness of a Power which, in Scripture language, is "working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure." We may thus, as I have indicated, rise above ourselves, and return on a higher level to a contemplative attitude, even in relation to our own interests and actions. Such an attitude does not, indeed, exclude practice any more than it excludes theory; but it raises them both into a higher form and gives them both a new meaning, making the idea of God, as the one principle that manifests itself in the whole system of things, predominant over all sense of division and conflict within that system. Thus religion is not adverse to practical activity any more than to scientific enquiry; but it brings to the latter a consciousness

that 'the real is the rational,' which is the anticipative solution of all theoretical difficulties; and it lifts the former above all its doubts and fears by the faith that the battle which it fights with evil is already won. It is, indeed, the great paradox of the religious consciousness, that, as theory, it can foresee the unity of the world with the demands of the intelligence, even when it is most fully conscious of the defects of our actual knowledge; and that, as practice, it can combine the utmost energy in the struggle against evil with the conviction that evil cannot but be overcome, and even that it exists only to be overcome, or made subservient to greater good. In short, religion in its ultimate meaning is just that consciousness of the whole in the parts, of the end in the beginning, which makes the spirit of man strong to face all the apparent materialism of nature and all the deeper materialism of human life, and to detect a spiritual meaning even in natural necessity, and a soul of goodness even in things evil. And what religion thus anticipates or intuitively apprehends, it is the business of philosophy, which is only religion brought to self-consciousness, to work out theoretically, not by withdrawing its eyes from that which is apparently irrational or imperfect, but by reinterpreting all such appearances in view of its highest principle. Hence if we call philosophy contemplation, we must mean by this not

that it is merely theoretic, but that it belongs or ought to belong, like religion, to a region of consciousness which is beyond the opposition of theory and practice.

Such an interpretation of the doctrine that contemplation is higher than action is a possible one: but can we ascribe it in any sense to Aristotle? If we could, it would be possible to agree with those who maintain that the one-sidedness of his philosophy is only apparent, and that, at least in the ultimate results of his speculations, he rises above all dualism. Now I shall not assert that the ambiguity of the doctrine in question is without influence upon Aristotle, or that the higher interpretation of it is always excluded by his words. So long as two senses of a proposition have not been clearly distinguished and set in opposition to each other, it is possible that they may alternate, or even be confused together, in the mind of a philosopher who asserts it. It is, therefore, possible to take the statements of Aristotle in the sense just explained, in spite of all the arguments to the contrary which have been already adduced. Our final decision as to his meaning, however, must be derived from a consideration of his direct statements as to the idea of God, as a pure self-contemplative intelligence. These are to be found mainly in that great theological tractate which is

the culminating result of Aristotle's metaphysic,[1] a tractate which unfortunately is very succinct and difficult to interpret, but which has had more influence upon the subsequent history of theology than any other philosophical writing.

The central thought of this tractate is, as I have indicated, that God must be conceived as living a life of pure contemplation. To him, as a being beyond all the limitations of finitude, we can ascribe only an activity, which is free from all unrest, because it is conditioned by no matter, and has no object but itself. Thus God's life is not like man's, a process of development from potentiality to actuality; it is the out-going of an unimpeded energy, which yet rests for ever in the joy of its own completeness. Such an activity must be purely ideal. It must be *νόησις νοήσεως*, a pure self-consciousness, which has no need to go out of itself for an object, or, like our intelligence, to come to itself through the consciousness of an external world; but which is ever self-contained, ever one with itself, —an *ἐνέργεια ἀκινησίας*, an activity which is without movement or change, a peace which is not death but an infinite self-centred life.

"The life of God," says Aristotle, "is like the highest kind of activity with us: but while we can maintain it but for a short time, with him it is

[1] *Met.*, XII, 6-10.

eternal; for it is an activity which is at the same time the joy of attainment. What other reason can be given for the fact that the modes of our waking consciousness, sensation and thought, are the keenest of pleasures, from which also the secondary pleasures of hope and memory are derived? Now, pure thought is thinking of that which is essentially good, and the highest thought has the highest object. And if we ask what that object is, the answer must be that the intelligence thinks *itself* when it lays hold of that which is intelligible: in other words, the intelligence itself becomes intelligible when it comes into immediate contact with the intelligible object and thinks it, so that subject and object are identified. For the faculty which can receive into itself the intelligible, which is also the real, is the intelligence, and its activity implies that it has its object in itself. Hence it is in this activity rather than in the mere capacity for it that the intelligence shows its divine nature. Contemplation is thus the best and happiest of activities, and if all we could say were that God's life is like our life in the highest moments of contemplative thought, it would be worthy of our admiration: but if it be better with him than with us, it must be still more worthy of it. And so it is indeed. In him is life: for the activity of intelligence is life, and He is that activity. Thus his essential activity constitutes a perfect and a

blessed life. We speak of God, therefore, as a living being, perfect and eternal: for to him is ascribed a life which is continuous and eternal: or, we might rather say, He is life eternal."[1]

In this conception of God as an eternal activity complete in itself, He is put in direct antithesis to the finite world, which is essentially a world of time and change, of birth and death. For in that world every substance that exists is developed out of a matter, which has the potentiality of it, by the agency of a previously existing substance, as the efficient cause of its development; and, again, every substance finds the end of its own existence in becoming the efficient cause of another substance of the same species. Thus in the process of the universe the same form is reproduced again and again in a succession of individuals, which are connected with each other as causes and effects; and the whole creation moves through a series of changes that continually repeat themselves. We have to observe further that, according to Aristotle, this cycle of changes goes on, not only in the succession of the generations of living things which continually have the same form reproduced in them, but also in the whole movement of the universe up to the circular motions of the heavens. The ebb and flow of human existence, the rise and fall of nations and civilisations, is but one of the phases of the great secular process of

[1] *Met.*, 1072*b*, 15.

'becoming,' which, after a long period, brings back to the same point the cyclical revolution of things: a revolution which has often repeated itself before, and will again and again repeat itself in the future. Thus time, in the language of Plato, becomes the 'moving image of eternity,' and the endless circular movement of the universe exhibits *sub specie temporis* the nearest analogon to the immediate return upon itself or rest in itself of the Absolute Mind, whose ideal activity is above all movement or change. Or perhaps we should rather say that the finite world, in the limitless self-externality of space and the endless succession of time, is the opposite counterpart of the pure self-contained unity and unchanging self-identity of the Eternal Spirit.

But this immediately suggests a problem, which in one form or another has caused much difficulty in the history of philosophy: How can these opposites be connected with each other? How can a spiritual being who is ever one with himself, be conceived as in any way relating himself to the divided and changeful existence of the world in space and time? How can an activity which, *ex hypothesi*, must be represented as a pure activity of thought, be at the same time a cause of motion in extended and material substance? And how, on the other hand, can such substances be supposed to react upon him or to put themselves in any relation to him? Aristotle in one place seems

distinctly to tell us that God can think nothing but himself. To suppose him to think anything lower than himself is to degrade him, and to suppose him to think anything other than himself is to make him dependent. But if God be thus "of purer eyes than to behold" not only 'iniquity,' but even contingency and finitude, and if his whole activity is pure contemplation, how can He have anything to do with the changing finite world? Zeller, the historian of Greek philosophy, maintains that Aristotle has no real answer to this question, that his God, as a purely contemplative Being, is necessarily shut up within himself, so that he can neither act upon the universe nor even take cognisance of it. Zeller further supports this view by pointing out that, though Aristotle speaks of God as the *first mover*, the original cause of all existence, yet when he tries to explain the manner of this movement he is able only to say that God κινεῖ ὡς ἐρώμενον, moves the world by being the object after which the whole creation strives, and not as if it were in any way determined by his action. In other words, it is not that God loves the world, but that the world loves and longs for God. He is the ideal to which all other things are more or less remote approximations; He is the end to which they move; but we are not to conceive of him as acting on or in them.

Now it must be admitted that Aristotle gives considerable grounds for such a view of his doctrine.

In the first place, in his account of the relation of the world to God, he seems always to move upward and not downwards. In other words, he seems always to be showing that the finite world cannot be conceived to be complete and independent, and that its existence must therefore be referred back to God; but not that in the nature of God, as he describes it, there is any necessity or reason for the existence of the world. Thus he frequently argues that an endless series of movements is impossible without a first mover, and that this first mover must be himself unmoved. For movement is always of one thing by another, and a self-mover, as Aristotle urged against Plato, is *ex vi termini* impossible. But the idea of an 'unmoved mover' seems not less liable to objection, unless we can admit the conception of a kind of action which, without being motion, yet produces it in other things. God, then, must be conceived to move the world by a kind of action which is not movement. But what can this mean? The only other kind of action we know is the ideal action of desire and will, in beings that are capable of such motives. Now desire is that appetency, directed to particular objects, which belongs to all sensitive beings; while will is that love and longing for the universal good, which is peculiar to beings who are rational and self-conscious. It is only in this way that intelligent beings can be

moved or acted upon, namely, in so far as their will is determined by the object of their thought.[1] But as God thinks only himself, he can will and love nothing but himself, and, if we try to conceive of any influence of the divine Being which goes beyond himself, it can only be in so far as there is something divine in the world which loves and seeks itself in God.

It is easy to see that Aristotle has here come to a kind of dead-lock. The moving and changing world must be referred back to an unmoving and unchanging Being as the source of its movement; the series of causes and effects to a Being who is a cause without being an effect. But when we come to this point, we find that the principle which we have used to reach it is broken in our hands: for a mover who is not moved has an activity which cannot be conceived as of the nature of motion at all; a cause that is not an effect cannot be introduced as a member, even as the first member, of the series of conditioned causes. We may hide this from ourselves by speaking of a self-mover with Plato, or an unmoved mover with Aristotle, or a *causa sui* with Spinoza; but this is only a disguise for the fact that we have made what Aristotle calls a μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος, a change to a quite different category

[1] The above is a paraphrase of the beginning of the seventh chapter of the twelfth book of the *Metaphysic*.

or way of explanation. For in this unmoved mover, we are obliged to assume a kind of action which cannot be described as movement nor as causation, at least in the sense in which we have hitherto been using these words. Instead of a first link in the chain of temporal events—which, if we hold to the idea of movement or cause, is an impossibility—what we have now suggested to us is a kind of cause or mover which is not *in* the chain at all, either as the beginning or as any part of it, but one which is equally related to all its links. Hence Aristotle is obliged to think of the unmoved mover, not as beginning the whole circular movement of the heavens,—indeed, for him it has no beginning—but as continually producing and maintaining it. In other words, He is not a first in time, but a principle which is logically prior to, or presupposed in, all time.

But how are we to represent this new kind of action, this self-determination which is above movement or change? It can only be conceived, as Aristotle admits, as a purely ideal or spiritual movement, such as that by which we set before us an end, and make it the object of our endeavour. Now such self-determination of a spiritual being is easily conceivable, and in imperfect beings, who yet can think of a perfection which they have not attained, it may be conceived as a *transeunt*

activity, that is, as an activity which carries them beyond themselves to the Being in whom is the perfection which they seek. In God, however, as a perfect being, it cannot be so represented; for there can be no external final cause of his activity. Hence Aristotle seems forced to think of the ideal activity, which connects God with the world, as one which is in the world and not in God. And he only partly disguises this discrepancy when he speaks of there being 'something divine' in all creatures which makes them seek the highest good; or, again, when he personifies nature, and endows it with a will for the best which is partly thwarted by the conditions of its realisation. In this way of conceiving the relation of God to the world there is a twofold failure; in so far as the action spoken of is not in God at all, and in so far as it is a kind of action that can be attributed only to rational beings; for to speak of a will of nature is to speak of nature as if it were a rational being. If, indeed, we could apply to God's presence in the world what Aristotle says of organisms in general, namely, that the whole, or the principle of the whole, is in every part, we might give a more definite meaning to the assertion of a 'divine something' in the world which loves and seeks for God; but this would be to attach too much importance to isolated expressions. And, apart from this, all that Aristotle has proved is that the

world, as a finite existence in space and time, cannot be conceived as having the principle of its movement and change in itself; but he has not shown how a spiritual being can be conceived as originating such movement and change, or indeed, as relating himself in any way to it.

This conclusion, however, has to be modified by two considerations: first, that, in spite of these difficulties in conceiving God as the active principle in all being, as both its first and its final cause, Aristotle does undoubtedly so conceive Him. His special objection to the Platonic and Pythagorean theories is that they supply no such principle, and even set the world of change in such opposition to the eternal that no connexion can be discerned between them. While, therefore, he declares on the one hand, that there must be something higher than the objects of sense, otherwise there will be no principle of order in the world of sense itself—seeing that every principle that can be set up will have to be referred to a higher principle *ad infinitum*; on the other hand, he asserts equally that what is wanted cannot be found in the ideas of Plato or the numbers of the Pythagoreans, which are indeed higher than the things of sense, but utterly unconnected with them, and therefore incapable of determining them. His own theory, therefore, he regards as alone supplying a self-determining principle, which can be a determin-

ing principle for the world of sense. Further, he thinks that by this conception he has also explained the unity of the world, and bound all that is finite together into one whole by connecting it with one divine cause; and he quotes as against all theories that admit separate and independent spheres of being, Homer's vindication of monarchy: "The rule of many is not good; let one be ruler of all." Aristotle is, therefore, satisfied that his own view, by referring all change and movement of the universe to a spiritual Being—who, as such, is a self-determining activity that is beyond movement and change—has solved the difficulty of explaining the origin of the world. He has thus, he thinks, set up a principle which, as spiritual, is beyond the world, and yet able to act upon it. And he sums up his conception of God, as at once immanent in the universe and transcending it, in what is one of the most striking passages in all the literature of theology.

"If it be asked," he says,[1] "in which of two possible ways the nature of the universe contains the good and the best, whether as something separate, existing independently in itself, or as the order of its parts, the answer is that, as in the case of an army, it must be in both ways at once. For the excellence of an army lies in its order, and it is separately embodied in the general. It lies, however, more in the latter

[1] *Met.*, XII, 10.

than in the former; for the general does not exist because of the order, but the order because of him. Now all things in the universe are somehow ordered together, whatever swims in the sea, or flies in the air, or grows on the earth, but not all in like fashion Nothing exists apart and without some kind of relation to the rest; for all things are ordered in relation to one end. But it is as in a household, the free members of which are least of all left to their own devices, but have all or most of their actions determined beforehand with reference to the general wellbeing, while the slaves and animals have a few things prescribed to them with relation to that end, and for the rest are left to themselves. Thus in each member of the whole, its own nature manifests itself as the principle of its actions: and by this I mean that each has a special sphere allotted to it, while there are certain other things in which they all contribute to the good of the whole."

Whatever, therefore, may be the defects of Aristotle's way of realising his own conception, there can be no doubt that he means, by referring the whole order of the natural world to a spiritual and therefore a self-determining principle, to escape from the dilemma on one or other horn of which he supposes all his predecessors to have been impaled. This dilemma is that either the world of time and sense has no cause beyond itself (which is self-

contradictory, as such a world cannot be conceived as complete in itself); or that, if it be referred to a cause beyond itself, such a cause is altogether cut off from it, and therefore cannot explain it. But Aristotle's own view does not seem to do what he claims for it: for it does not explain how the conception of the purely ideal self-determination of that divine Being, who lives a life of pure contemplation, can escape from the same censure which he applies to the Platonic theory; in other words, how such pure thought, directed only upon itself, can become a determination of anything else than itself. And his doctrine that it moves the world 'as loved by it,' seems to show at once that he feels the difficulty, and that he can only solve it by an *ignoratio elenchi.* Like many subsequent writers, he seeks to bind the world to God without binding God to the world; nor does he make any use even of the pregnant hint of Plato, that God is good, and that goodness must seek to communicate itself.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that the metaphor of the army and the general contains a suggestion which gives us some help in dealing with the difficulty raised by Aristotle himself, when he says that God cannot think anything lower than or different from himself, and therefore, it would seem to follow, cannot think the finite world, which is full of change and contingency. He can think it,

Aristotle seems to answer, in its order, in the forms or types that are realised in it. The divine intelligence, therefore, must be conceived, not as an abstract self-consciousness, but as gathering all the ideal forms that are realised in the world into the unity of one thought. This also seems to be the meaning of another passage,[1] in which Aristotle asks whether the object of the divine reason is simple, or complex and composite. He answers that it must be simple; for, if the parts of that object were externally put together, reason would be subject to change in passing from one of them to another; and this would imply that it was not altogether immaterial. Aristotle, then, goes on to illustrate this thought by a comparison of the divine to the human intelligence. "As the human mind, though it has a complex object, yet at times apprehends it as a unity; not attaining to the good it seeks in each part severally, but finding the *summum bonum* in the whole, and that, in spite of the fact, that the subject here is different from the object it contemplates; so it is with the divine intelligence, whose object is itself, through all eternity."[2]

Thus, according to Aristotle, even the human intelligence, in spite of the complexity in itself and in its object, which is due to the presence of a material element in both, can rise to the perception of the good, not as an attribute of particular things but as

[1] *Met.*, XII, 9. [2] *Met.*, 1075*a*, 8.

a principle of unity that transcends all their difference. It cannot, however, identify its consciousness of the object with its consciousness of itself as this individual. But the divine intelligence does not need any such process. To it the forms of things are at once present in their ideal nature, free from all matter, and the object is therefore ever in transparent unity with the subject. Thus God must be conceived as having a self-consciousness which is at the same time a consciousness of the ideal order of the world.

From these considerations it seems clear, that the simplicity which Aristotle attributes to the divine intelligence is not the absence of all multiplicity, but a transparent unity in which all difference is taken up and resolved. God's thought is thus represented as embracing all the elements of the whole in one indivisible intuition, just as a great artist sees at one glance the whole work of art in the inter-dependence of all its parts, or as a great scientific man grasps his whole science in one complete thought.[1] In such an intuition there is no possibility of separating the object from the subject, the consciousness of the world from the consciousness of the self. Yet this must not be taken to mean that they are simply merged in one, but only that there is an identity which is above their difference and maintains itself through it. It is true that this view is not as fully

[1] See Vol. I, p. 340.

and distinctly expressed by Aristotle as we might desire, and that, as has been said, the use of the word 'simple' is apt to produce a misconception, even if we could be sure that it did not imply one. And when we find him maintaining that reason in its perception of the highest truth is beyond judgment, and therefore incapable of error, because it grasps the object in an immediate way that is parallel to the direct perceptions of sense, *θιγγάνων καὶ νοῶν*, 'touching it and in the touch having an intellectual intuition of it'; we are obliged to acknowledge that he is haunted by a false ideal of absolute unity and unmingled simplicity, of a unity of the object with the intelligence which is only a bare identity, and of an intuition in which all the discourse of reason is extinguished.

But a still greater difficulty remains. Even if we put aside such objections and give Aristotle all the benefit of the above interpretation, it does not explain how the ideal forms of things can be realised in matter at all, nor how, as a consequence of this, the universe can admit contingency and imperfection, movement and change. The whole process of the finite—with all its division and fluctuation, the continual conflict of its parts, and the marred and distorted existences which the conflict produces—seems to lie beyond the sphere of the contemplative reason, which cannot see anything but an ideally

complete whole in which every element is in perfect unity and harmony with every other. The rift which goes through Aristotle's conception of the life of man, which reappears in his view of science, and again in his separation of theory from practice—this rift is seen finally to take the form of an opposition between the world in space and time as it is presented in sense-perception, and the world of ideal forms which is alone capable of being grasped and understood by reason, and which, therefore, is the only world that can exist for the divine intelligence. Nor does Aristotle allow us to take refuge in the idea that the world of sense and opinion is only the world as imperfectly apprehended by the developing intelligence, which knows neither the world nor itself as they really are. This may seem a plausible way out of the difficulty, but to introduce it into Aristotle would be to reconstruct his whole philosophy. Nor, indeed, would it solve the difficulty; for the problem is just this: to understand how a world conditioned by space and time, and an imperfect though developing intelligence which apprehends it under such conditions, should exist at all, or rather how any ground for their existence can be found in the divine nature. And we are obliged to acknowledge that in Aristotle's idea of God no such ground can be discovered, unless we interpret contemplation in a way for which we can find no sufficient warrant in his writings.

The subject may be made clearer by raising another question. The object of thought must be distinguished from the thought that apprehends it, else it could not be present to that thought as an object; yet in another aspect it must be one with the thought that apprehends it, else it could not be present to it at all. Now, how are we to discriminate between these two aspects? In what sense is the object of thought only thought itself, and in what sense is it other than thought? Aristotle seems to answer that there is an element in the object which is ideal and therefore can be grasped by reason, and that there is another element in the object which is alien to reason, and which is present to us only through the faculty of sense. Such splitting of the difference, however, will not solve the difficulty; for, if we follow it out logically, it leads us to the result that the ideal element by itself is not objective, and the element which makes it objective is not ideal. But what we want to explain is just how that which is objective should be apprehended by reason, how the ideal world should be also real. Now, from the point of view of Aristotle, the divine or perfect reason cannot apprehend anything but itself, and the objective, as such, must be altogether beyond its reach. It appears, therefore, that the admission into the objective world of any element which, in

Aristotle's sense, is not rational and therefore not explicable by the intelligence, must end in a complete denial of the rationality of the objective world, and in a recoil of the mind upon itself and its own inner consciousness, as that in which alone it can have any real apprehension of truth. The subjective movement of later Greek philosophy, with its concentration upon self-consciousness and its indifference to all knowledge of the world as well as to all the practical bonds of society, is therefore already prefigured in Aristotle.

Now a thorough-going idealism must recognise that thought and reason cannot be confined to itself, that, indeed, it can be conscious of itself only in relation to that which is not itself. For such an idealism there can be no self-consciousness which is not also the consciousness of an objective world. Yet the objective, which is other than itself, must be *its* other, its counterpart; it must be an object in which reason can find itself again, else it could not be presented at all. In other words, thought is possible only as it recognises the distinction between itself and its object, and at the same time transcends this distinction. The neglect of the former of these points leads to a one-sided or merely subjective idealism, while the neglect of the latter gives rise to an irreconcilable dualism; and very often we find philosophical speculation swaying from

one of these extremes to the other. Thus a dualistic view of the relation between subject and object is almost certain to lead to a retreat upon the subjective, as that which alone is within the compass of the intelligence; and a Berkeleian reduction of all objects to ideas is very apt to raise the thought of another kind of objects which are not relative to the subject, and which therefore are altogether beyond the reach of knowledge. On the other hand, a thoroughgoing idealism will not fear to admit the reality of that which is other than mind, and even, in a sense, diametrically opposed to it; for it rests on a perception that these opposites are yet necessarily related, and that both are different and correlated aspects of one whole.

Now Aristotle never attains to such a view of the question, but, so far as we can see, maintains the existence of a material, and therefore unintelligible, element[1] in the universe, corresponding to our sense-apprehension of the particular. Yet this insight was not very far from him: for it is not difficult to see that his conception of the finite world makes it the necessary correlate of his conception of pure self-consciousness, and, therefore, not really independent of it or separable from it. The objective world in its endless difference is not the

[1] *Met.*, 1036*a*, 9, ἡ δ' ὕλη ἄγνωστος καθ' αὑτήν. Cf. *Met.*, 1039*b*, 27: *Phys.*, 207*a*, 25.

negation of the unity of pure self-consciousness, but its contrary, not merely other than it, but *its* other. The pure inwardness of the mind is the opposite counterpart of the self-externality of things in space; as also its constant return upon itself is the opposite counterpart of the continual passing away of things in time. And if we apply the Aristotelian principle that the knowledge of opposites is one, we must admit that thought transcends this difference of itself and its object, and that for it the ultimate reality must be found in the unity of its terms. Unfortunately Aristotle seems to deny that this principle holds good for the pure or absolute intelligence,[1] and to assert not that that intelligence transcends all opposition, but that for it the opposition does not exist at all.

I may put this in a still clearer way by connecting it with another aspect of the doctrine of Aristotle to which I have referred above. Aristotle declares that the only practical activity which we can ascribe to a rational being is the activity produced by the love of a good which is the object of his thought. But he is embarrassed by the difficulty that the divine intelligence can find no such good in anything but itself: and in this sense he seems to agree with the saying of Spinoza, that "he who loves God cannot desire that God should love him in return." He, therefore,

[1] See Vol. I, p. 344.

ascribes the movement of the universe to the love of the imperfect creation for God as its perfection. This is the 'something divine' which, in nature, anticipates and points to the perfection it wants, and which, in man, rises into a consciousness of God, and even a participation in his life of contemplation. Thus Aristotle seems to anticipate the doctrine of St. Paul that "the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God"; and that we also, who "have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves, waiting" for the fuller realisation of the divine nature in us. In other words, he anticipates the explanation of the world-process as a process of development towards a higher good, which is implied in its existence from the beginning. This doctrine, however, is a general expression which he does not attempt to work out to its consequences; and the correlative doctrine that the divine love embraces the finite world, and that it is in that world that God is manifested and realised, has no place in his philosophy, unless we are to find some trace of it in the metaphor of the army and its general.

It appears, then, that the question which was raised at the beginning of this lecture as to the meaning of Aristotle's doctrine of the primacy of the intelligence cannot be definitely answered in either way. The general trend and purport of his philosophy is toward

dualism, and towards that abstract opposition of contemplation to action which is the result of dualism. But, in the first place, we have to admit that the pure self-contemplation of God is conceived as being at the same time the contemplation of the intelligible world, that is, of all the ideal forms realised in the universe. And, in the second place, we have to recognise that there are passages in which contemplation seems to be taken not in an exclusive but in an inclusive sense, not as meaning a rest of the intelligence in itself which is the negation of all practical activity, but as the consciousness of a unity which transcends all oppositions, even the opposition of the theoretical and the practical life. These passages, however, seem to be little more than the intuitive glimpses of a truth beyond the range of his explicit system, which we may find in every great thinker. Indeed, if we were allowed to take such glimpses of truth as if they were equivalent to a clear vision of all that is involved in them, it would be difficult to prove that there has been any progress in philosophy or even in human thought; or that the latest philosopher has gone beyond the thoughts which presented themselves to the first men who reflected upon their own nature and upon the nature of the universe.

LECTURE FIFTEENTH.

THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE POST-ARISTOTELIAN PHILOSOPHY.

In my previous lectures I have endeavoured to give a connected view of the development of theological ideas in Greece up to the time of Aristotle. The great idealistic movement which culminated in the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle was the first, and perhaps the greatest, effort ever made to reach a comprehensive view of the universe in which no element of reality should be suppressed or mutilated. And the enormous influence which these two thinkers have exerted over the whole subsequent course of speculation shows that they were able to determine at least the main issues of philosophical enquiry, and to mark out the main lines upon which philo sophical discussion must proceed. But it was in the nature of the case impossible that at that early period, when human experience was so limited, any conclusive results should be attained. Difficulties

as to the nature of man or of the world he inhabits must be searched to their deepest root ere they can be solved. Oppositions of thought and life must be worked out to their extreme issues ere they can be reconciled; the different aspects of things must be clearly defined and distinguished from each other ere their true relations can be seen. Hence it was impossible for Plato and Aristotle to realise all that is involved in the questions they raised—questions the difficulty and importance of which has since been brought to light by ages of conflict and controversy—still less to reach a satisfactory solution of them. They were constrained to 'heal the hurt' of philosophy 'slightly' because they could not probe its depth. Just because they did not realise fully the difference and antagonism of the elements which they seek to combine in their philosophies, they were often satisfied with an external subordination of one of them to another, and did not realise how far this falls short of a true reconciliation of them. Hence in spite of the great effort after system which is characteristic of Plato, in spite of the analytic genius of Aristotle, the ultimate result is of the nature of a compromise; and however necessary and useful compromise may be in practical matters, in the world of thought it cannot settle anything. Rather it is sure in the long run to lead to a revolt of the fettered intelligence, and even to a violent recoil or reaction, in

which the elements artificially combined are again torn away from the connexion into which they have been brought and set in abstract opposition to each other.

This statement will become clearer, if we recall the nature of the philosophical presuppositions from which Plato and Aristotle started, and the consequent defectiveness of the results they reached. Both the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies were attempts to explain the world on the principle of Anaxagoras that "all things were in chaos till reason came to arrange them." In other words, they started from a dualism of form and matter which they sought to overcome by subjecting the latter to the former. The ultimate tendency of such a mode of thought is shown in the Aristotelian conception of the relations of God and the universe. It is the conception, on the one hand, of a pure intelligence which is eternally one with itself, a *νόησις νοήσεως*, or divine self-consciousness, in which the difference of subject and object at once yields to their transparent unity, and their duality is at once expressed and transcended in one perfect act of intuition; and it is the conception, on the other hand, of a world of conflict and change, which is made up of parts that are indifferent and external to each other, and which in its endless revolution is ever seeking, yet ever failing, to attain to unity with itself and with the

divine centre of its being. Thus the self-centred intelligence of God, whose self-consciousness is at the same time the consciousness of the ideal world, is sharply contrasted with the division and antagonism of the material world, which is never at one with itself but exhibits rather an endless vicissitude of things that can never be rounded into a complete whole. For in the finite world the ideal principles are manifested under conditions which prevent them from ever attaining to perfect realisation, and therefore, in place of one individual reality completely corresponding to its idea, we have an endless series of imperfect existences, each of which is, so to speak, an effort of nature to reach the archetype of which it inevitably falls short. In so speaking we are only using the half-metaphorical language of Aristotle, who tells us that nature, being unable to reach eternity in the individual, seeks immortality in the species:[1] in other words, that the specific form survives, though the individuals in which it is manifested continually pass away and give place to other individuals. Thus all finite things are ever realising, yet never once for all realise the ideal principle which yet constitutes their inmost nature. Even man, as a finite subject, fails to attain to perfect unity with that active reason which yet makes him what he is, as a conscious and self-conscious being.

[1] See Vol. I, p. 289.

The outlines of this dualistic view of things were already drawn by Plato, but it is Aristotle who fills up the sketch and gives definiteness and precision to its details, and who thereby at the same time reveals the fatal flaw that runs through it. Aristotle, indeed, differs from Plato, in so far as he regards the ideal form not as a universalising but as an individualising principle; not as uniting the different elements in each existence into a whole, but rather as distinguishing each individual being from all the others. But this difference only enables them to find opposite ways of expression for the same error. With both the ideal form or principle is viewed as complete in itself and as having no necessary relation to its matter.[1] And this, as we have seen, inevitably carries with it not only the division of God from the world, but also the division of the reason in man from the other elements of his nature. It even implies the division of the intuitive reason in him, which is regarded as eternal, from the discursive reason by which he takes account of the relations of finite things, as well as from all the feelings of desire and aversion, love and hate, which affect his finite life. Thus also the argument for immortality, which in Plato seems to refer to the individual soul, becomes in Aristotle confined to the

[1] This, however, must be modified in the case of Aristotle by what is said in Vol. I, p. 277 *seq.*

universal reason, which is ever realising itself in the series of finite subjects, but is never finally realised in any one of them.

Now this dualistic severance of the higher from the lower, of the spiritual from the material, was in the future to be taken up and carried to still further consequences by the Neo-Platonists. But the immediate result was rather to throw discredit on the philosophy which had endeavoured to combine such inconsistent elements, and to provoke a strong reaction towards the simpler ways of earlier philosophy. The theories of Plato and Aristotle, as I have shown, were systematic efforts to comprehend all things as parts of one whole, to understand man as a member of society and a part of the universe, and all the elements of human nature in their due relation to each other. They did not set up one simple principle and try to deduce everything from it, but rather regarded the world as a complex unity in which every part is supported, and, in a sense, proved by all the other parts. This is manifest as regards Plato, for though he tells us that the Idea of Good is the principle upon which all things rest, he does not mean by this that there is one truth from which all other truths are derived. For the Idea of Good is simply the idea that all things are united with each other and with the mind that knows them, the idea that all being and all thought, all subjective and all objective

reality, are to be regarded as elements in one whole, in which each part implies and is implied by all the others. The test of truth, therefore, lies for Plato not in the conformity of all things to some one standard, but in the systematic coherence in which each truth becomes the standard for all the rest. There is no tortoise supporting the elephant which supports the universe; for the universe is a rounded and self-contained whole, whose parts are reciprocally reasons and consequents of each other. This is Plato's way of looking at things, and, in spite of Aristotle's tendency to lay emphasis on difference rather than on unity, on distinction rather than on connexion, we may fairly say that it is his also; for he also bids us think of the world as an ordered drama in which there are no episodes. Still, in both philosophers, as we have just seen, there is a presupposition which tends continually to counteract their effort after organic connexion, and to reduce their philosophy to an external combination of irreconcileable elements. Beginning with an unexplained difference, they are never able to overcome it. Thus they fail to realise the conception of system after which they are striving; in other words, they fail to bring the particular elements of their philosophy into harmony with the general idea of it, and this failure in the long run tends to compromise the idea itself.

As, however, philosophy cannot but strive after systematic unity, the post-Aristotelian schools find themselves obliged to endeavour to realise it in another way, not by comprehension but by abstraction, not by binding all the different elements and aspects of the universe into one whole, but by isolating one of these elements, treating it alone as absolutely real, and explaining away everything that is different from or opposed to it. The effect of this method is two-fold. On the one hand, it brings out into startling relief and prominence one of the sides or aspects of the truth, and logically follows it out apart from the others without shrinking from any of the inconvenient consequences of its isolation. On the other hand, this complete and consequent development of what, after all, is only an abstraction, a constituent of truth torn away from its place in the whole, necessarily brings with it a nemesis, in dwarfing or throwing into the shade, if not entirely obliterating, all the other elements of it, and ultimately in depriving even the favoured element itself of all its meaning. Moreover, such a method of abstraction tends to force all the questions of philosophy into the form of a choice between exclusive alternatives; and it is forgotten that there can be no opposition which does not imply relation, and that, if they were absolutely isolated from each other, the extremes would cease even to be exclusive. Hence

Post-Aristotelian philosophy presents the spectacle of two opposite dogmatisms dividing the field of thought; though each of them really has its *raison d'être* in the other, and would lose all its meaning if it were successful in destroying its opponent. Lastly, when it dawns upon the mind that the choice between two such alternatives is arbitrary, and that equal reasons can be given both for and against both, nothing seems to be left for the philosopher but a scepticism, which acknowledges the equipoise and refuses to adopt either alternative. Thus we have the Stoics on the one side, and the Epicureans on the other, engaged in an endless polemic against each other, and the Sceptics coming to draw the conclusion that truth is unattainable, though in doing so they only add another dogmatism to those which they oppose.

From every formal point of view these philosophers show a great falling off from Plato and Aristotle. The crude theories of Epicurus and Zeno as to the criterion of truth, and as to the ultimate nature of reality, are in a distinctly lower key of speculation than the Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysic and dialectic. Still lower from a scientific, if not from a literary point of view, are the epigrammatic moralisings of Seneca, the aphoristic meditations of Marcus Aurelius, and the practical sermons of Epictetus, in all of which the theoretic basis of ethics is rather

pre-supposed than explained. But, notwithstanding this inferiority of speculative power, we cannot admit that this new movement of thought is to be regarded as a retrograde one, still less that it shows a failure of the human intelligence in the face of the problem of the universe. It is quite possible that a system of philosophy may be less rich and comprehensive, as well as less stringent in its method, and yet that it may indicate a relative advance in human thought. There may be a dialectical value in the absence of dialectic; and a narrowing outlook upon the whole sphere of knowledge may be the necessary condition of a growing clearness of perception in one direction. When a principle is isolated, it becomes possible to see its full meaning and all its consequences, apart from the confusion and uncertainty which is thrown upon it, when it is combined with other principles in any, even the best, system of compromise. For example, Aristotle's doctrine of virtue, as a mean state of passion which is determined by reason, no doubt combines into a kind of whole all the elements of the moral life; but it suggests rather the idea of a compromise, or of the external subjection of one element by another, than of any true unity of the two sides of man's nature. Aristotle does not show anything like an adequate comprehension of the violence and extent of the conflict between the flesh and the spirit; and therefore he is only able, so to

speak, to patch up a kind of truce between them. He has no glimpse of such a fierce inward struggle between the law of the mind and the law of the members as is pictured to us by St. Paul, and, just because of this, he cannot see his way to a complete reconciliation of man with himself. Hence it was a great step in advance when the truce, which Aristotle had established between the different sides or elements of human nature, was broken, and when the effort was made by the Epicureans and the Stoics to treat each element as complete in itself and to follow out all the consequences of doing so. It was necessary that the fire of a conflict between the opposing dogmatisms should be kindled, ere it could be seen that their opposition was merely that of complementary factors of truth, and ere the true way of reconciling them in a more comprehensive theory could be discerned.

Each of the post-Aristotelian philosophies, then, is one-sided and abstract. It aims at unity by taking some one of the elements which Plato and Aristotle had tried to combine, and explaining away the other elements. With this tendency to abstraction there comes also a tendency of philosophy to concentrate all its efforts on the practical problem, and that in its narrowest form, as the problem of the guidance of the individual life. This was not, indeed, quite a new tendency in Greek philosophy; for, from the

time of Pythagoras at least, philosophy had been regarded as involving a special kind of life as well as a system of doctrine. And Socrates, attempting as he did to base morality on a clear consciousness of the meaning and end of living, had seemed to make philosophy not only useful but indispensable for virtuous conduct. It was, however, only in the Minor Socratic schools that this tendency was followed out to its consequences, while both Plato and Aristotle recognise that the reflective consciousness of philosophy cannot be the sole nor even the primary guide of human life. Man, they maintain, must learn the first lessons of morality in the form of rules and habits of conduct which are supported by the social influences of the community in which he lives, and not in the form of ethical theory. And Aristotle even contends that he who would understand ethical teaching must, in the first instance, have had a good moral training and have acquired right habits. On this view ethical theory may improve practical morality by bringing to light the principles that underlie it, and so turning a morality of habit into a morality of principle, but it cannot, as Socrates had supposed, be the first teacher of it. At best, it can only be a guide to the philosophical statesman in framing or altering the constitution of the State, and so improving the ethical environment of the individual; but it cannot be the ground on which the

morality of the ordinary citizen should be consciously based. The individual must first be disciplined and moulded by unconscious influences into conformity with the society of which he is a member; and the State institutions, the State service, the State religion, the habits and rules recognised in his particular community, must be the main influences under which he becomes moralised. Hence Plato and Aristotle sought to improve the individual by improving the State, and to improve the State by supplying the philosophical statesman with a better theory to guide him in the work of legislation. But they made no direct appeal to the private citizen, nor did they believe that his morality could be directly based on philosophical teaching. And the value of their speculations on ethics and politics was almost entirely theoretical—in that they analysed the social phenomena of Greek life and discovered the principles which underlay it.

On the other hand, it was, as I have said above,[1] the Minor Socratic schools which from this point of view served themselves heirs to Socrates, setting the State aside and substituting the teaching of philosophy for its social training. It was their doctrine that moral life must be based on the conscious reason and reflexion of the individual, and that therefore each individual must determine for himself the end of his existence and how to seek it.

[1] Vol. I, p. 77.

Thus philosophy had with them to supply the very basis of social training. It had to become practical; and, indeed, it treated the practical guidance of life as its primary, if not its exclusive aim. We must, however, hasten to add that this attitude of the Minor Socratics was not of great practical importance; for in their days the idea of the State was still powerful, and Plato and Aristotle were following the main tendency of the time in making it the centre of their ethical theories. The Minor Socratics were rather in the position of Dissenters, who were in open protest against the general modes of belief accepted by their fellow-countrymen, but who bore in their breasts the promise of the future. They, and especially the Cynic school, were regarded as a peculiar class of men who withdrew from the common life, defied public opinion, and even broke away from the forms and restraints of what in their day was considered a respectable civic existence. Hence their views of morality could have no great influence upon their own time.

But it was entirely different in the post-Aristotelian era. Even in the time of Aristotle a great change was passing over the public life of Greece, by which all its ethical traditions were discredited, and a new importance was given to philosophical theories of morality. By the victories of Philip and Alexander the civic states of Greece were reduced to the rank of subordinate municipalities in a great

military empire; and, under the dynasties founded by Alexander's generals, they became the plaything and the prize of a conflict between greater powers, which they could not substantially influence. Finally, all their feeble attempts to reassert their independence were crushed by the organised force of Rome. Now every step in this direction tended to take something away from the City-State, and to widen the gulf between its actual life and the ideal community which Plato and Aristotle still sought to find in it or to produce from it. The fundamental idea of their political writings as of the politics of their country—that the municipal State was the *πέρας τῆς αὐταρκείας*, the exact form of social union in which the powers of man can best be educated, and in which they can find the most suitable field of exercise—this narrowly Greek idea had become antiquated and meaningless by the diffusion of Greek culture over the civilised world, and by the concentration of political authority in the Roman Emperor. Hence that withdrawal into private life, which to the Minor Socratics was a voluntary act, had now become a necessity. Indeed, we may fairly say that it was at this period that the division between public and private life, which is so familiar to us but was so unfamiliar to the Greeks, was first decisively established as a fact. A private non-political life became now, not the exception, but the rule; not

the abnormal choice of a few recalcitrant spirits, like Diogenes or Aristippus, but the inevitable lot of the great mass of mankind. The individual, no longer finding his happiness or misery closely associated with that of a community, whose law and custom was his supreme authority and whose service was his highest end, was thrown back upon his own resources, and had to ask himself how he could live and die for himself. Thus, on the one hand, all the traditions of Greek political ethics seemed to be rendered obsolete; and, on the other hand, the need for some new rule of individualistic morality was felt by ever growing classes of the community.

Nor could the ancient religions satisfy any such demand: for they were essentially national, and even political religions, bound up with the life of some society, and unable to contemplate the individual except as a member of it. Hence they lost a great part of their meaning, and tended to become an empty routine of ritual and observance, when they ceased to be the consecration of civic and national life. They could not meet the wants of the new time, or, in attempting to meet them, they became degraded into superstitions. Rome, in fact, when it conquered the nations, conquered their gods as well; but while it dissolved the religious bonds of national or municipal states, it was unable to substitute any new spiritual bond in their place. It

was ready, indeed, with politic tolerance to open a Pantheon, into which it admitted all the gods of the conquered peoples, but a new religion could not be made out of a jumble of all the cults of the past. And the worship of the Emperor was too materialistic, too obviously a worship of force, to satisfy any spiritual want; it was a kind of earthly religion based upon a despair of heaven. What Rome did was practically to pulverise the old societies, reducing them to a collection of individuals, and then to hold them together by an external organisation, military and legal. It bestowed on its subjects a greater measure of outward security, justice and peace than any nation had previously enjoyed: but it did little to promote inward unity. The *immensa pacis Romanae majestas* covered with its protection the greater part of the civilised world, but its effect was rather to level and disintegrate than to draw men together.

Now in modern times such a state of things would not have left men without spiritual guidance; or rather, we should say, it did not so leave them. For the modern world also has passed through a period in which the main tendency of thought was subjective and individualistic, in which the rights of the individual, the intellectual independence and moral self-sufficiency of the individual, were strongly asserted against all religious as well as against

all social authority. Yet the effect was not to produce that estrangement of all educated men from religion which was associated with the individualism of the ancient world. A similar scepticism did, indeed, find very powerful representatives, but though it greatly weakened the authority of churches and of the fixed dogmatic creeds which they taught, it did not destroy the power of Christianity over the minds of men. And the reason was that the Christian religion, in one aspect of it, is itself profoundly individualistic: in other words, it treats the individual as having an infinite worth in himself, and appeals strongly to the spiritual hopes and fears, to the inner experiences and aspirations of the individual soul. Hence it was able to clothe itself in new forms adapted to the consciousness of the time. In many of the Protestant sects it developed itself in a distinctly subjective form; in some it even severed the connexion between the inner and the outer life. This over-emphasis laid upon the subjective aspect of Christianity, no doubt, produced as one-sided and inadequate a view of that religion as the over-emphasis of the Latin Church upon its objective aspect. Still it showed that Christianity could speak to the time in its own language and could give it just the kind of spiritual support it required. But in the ancient religions there was hardly anything which could supply such a want. They were essentially objective,

and even externally objective; they were essentially social, national, and even political religions, and they decayed and died with the destruction of the independence of the communities into which they had breathed a spiritual energy. Hence philosophy had to step into the vacant place and to supply, at least for the educated classes, the kind of spiritual nutriment which they required. There is thus a measure of truth in Bacon's saying that for the ancients moral philosophy supplied the place of theology—at least if we read religion for theology, and confine the assertion to the Post-Aristotelian period of ancient history. The Stoic or Epicurean philosopher might without much exaggeration be said to have taken upon himself the office, which was afterwards filled by the Christian priest. The hortatory discourses of Epictetus are an anticipation of the sermon, and in his letters to many correspondents, consoling, encouraging, reproving and advising, Seneca seems almost to stand in the relation of a Christian pastor to his flock.

The Post-Aristotelian period, then, was one which had special need of some philosophical theory that could fortify the individual man in his isolation against the world, and could give unity, strength and direction to his life. It was, in a spiritual sense, a period of retrenchment, when the great moral and intellectual movement which had attended the development of the Greek municipal state, had come

to an end in the collapse of all such states before the overpowering military force of Macedon and Rome. The individual, living under a political system over which he had no control, had to abandon the main interests of his former life for the privilege of living in peace and security, and to bring his aims within the compass of a merely private existence. It was an age when, if we may so express it, men were forced to save the ship by throwing overboard the greater part of the cargo, and the saying of Perseus had become the motto of life: *Tecum habita et nôris quam sit tibi curta supellex.* The great venture of speculative thought in its effort to understand the universe, of which the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle were the principal products, seemed to have shared the same fate as the effort of Greece to realise political liberty, and to have ended in disappointment. In seeking to gain the world man appeared only to have been losing his own life. There was, therefore, a drawing back, a concentration, a gathering in of the forces of the human soul from their dispersion in objective interests, such as naturally follows on the failure or exhaustion of a great movement of expansion. Happiness, if it lay, as Aristotle thought, in a successful manifestation of all man's intellectual and moral energies, which should turn both nature and society into organs for his self-realisation—such happiness seemed no longer attainable. It remained

to be seen whether another kind of satisfaction could be secured which did not involve so great outward efforts and risks, in the ἀταραξία—the peace of one who retires into the secret chamber of the inner life and shuts to the door upon all that can disturb or harass him. It is this kind of happiness which is the common aim of the Stoic, Epicurean and Sceptic schools of philosophy.

Now the subjective and individualistic character of these schools might seem to preclude their having anything important to contribute to theology, even if it did not set them against religion in all its forms. But this is not entirely the case, and least of all with Stoicism. For though the Stoic draws back upon the inner life, what he finds there, as I shall have to show, is a perfectly universal principle—a principle which lifts the individual above all that is limited and particular in his own being, and subjects him to the divine reason, or even, in a sense, identifies him with it. Hence for the individual so conceived, the idea of liberty at once turns into that of determination by a universal reason, and individualism at a stroke converts itself into a kind of pantheism. We shall find that this dialectical movement breathes a religious spirit into even the earliest, but still more into the latest records of Stoicism, making it one of the philosophies which has most

profoundly influenced the course of religious thought, especially in the early development of Christian doctrine. With Epicureanism, though it too has a kind of theological bearing, thought begins to turn away from religion, and with the Sceptics philosophy is distinctly anti-theological. For our present enquiry, therefore, the main interest lies in Stoicism. The two other philosophies may be regarded as having hardly any bearing upon the progress of theology except so far as the sceptical collapse of their individualism helped by way of recoil the development of Neo-Platonism—a philosophy which might be described as essentially and entirely a theology or philosophy of religion.

There is one accidental advantage of the stage of philosophical development which we have now to examine, as compared with that which we have had to consider in previous lectures. This advantage lies in the more modern character of the problems we have to deal with. In studying Plato and Aristotle we are, so to speak, travelling in a foreign land, and learning to speak a philosophical language which is not our own. The problems with which they deal do not seem to be our problems, and we require much study and interpretation ere we can bring them into relation with our own modes of thought. In particular, we are embarrassed in the study of these philosophies by the contrast between

the naïve assumption of the unity of the individual with society which seems to pervade them, and the equally naïve assumption of the opposition between the soul and the world, the inner and the outer life, which is characteristic of many phases of modern thought. It might be said, with as much truth as can belong to any epigrammatic statement, that the modern mind begins where the ancients ended, and ends where they began. Our fathers have eaten the sour grapes of individualism and our teeth are set on edge. We may, indeed, get beyond the merely subjective tendencies of the modern consciousness, and perhaps the greatest achievement of modern philosophers lies in the way in which they have corrected and transcended these tendencies: but we find it difficult to go back to the position of those who were hardly conscious of such tendencies at all, or who regarded the opposition of subject and object as quite subordinate to the opposition of universal and particular.

But with the Stoics and Epicureans we have a feeling of kindred. Their individualism is so clearly akin to the familiar individualism of the eighteenth century that we have little difficulty in understanding its problems or criticising its attempts to solve them. And even when we come to Neo-Platonism, though there is much which repels us in the abstract theological spirit which it breathes, yet it, like the philosophy of the nineteenth century, is born out of

the struggle with individualism. It might, indeed, be described as an attempt to limit individualism so that it may be consistent with the belief in a unity which transcends all the differences of individuals; and, in this point of view, its merits and defects are equally instructive to us. For the highest aim of modern thought is just to combine a deep religious sense of the unity and universality of the divine principle, which reveals itself in the whole system of things, with that firm grasp of particular experience and that developed consciousness of the manifold secular relations of life, which have been given to the modern world.

LECTURE SIXTEENTH.

THE ORIGIN AND PRINCIPLE OF THE STOIC PHILOSOPHY.

I HAVE explained in the last lecture that after the speculative failure of Plato and Aristotle—in spite of their great philosophic genius—to attain to complete systematic unity, and after their practical failure to revive the social life of the Greek State, philosophy tended to become individualistic and subjective, to turn its attention from theories of the universe and the State to the inner life of the individual. As a consequence, greater importance began to be attached to the ideas of the Minor Socratic schools—the Cynics, Cyrenaics and Megarians, who had developed the doctrine of Socrates in an individualistic direction. These ideas, indeed, could not make much way in their original form; but in the philosophies of the Stoics and Epicureans they were freed from the narrowness and one-sidedness of their first expression, and so fitted to gain a

dominating influence over the minds of men. It is, however, necessary to go back to the earlier philosophies in order to understand the later, which were manifestly developed from them. In particular, it is hardly possible to understand Stoicism without reverting to the theories of the Cynics and Megarians; for it was the union of the ideas derived from these two schools that gave its distinctive character to the philosophy of Zeno, the founder of the Stoic School.

Now, the Cynic philosophy was one of those beginnings of progress which take the appearance of reaction. When some aspect of thought or life has been for a long time unduly subordinated, or has not yet been admitted to its rightful place, it not seldom finds expression in a representative individuality, who embodies it in his person, and works it out in its most exclusive and one-sided form, with an almost fanatical disregard of all other considerations—compensating for the general neglect of it by treating it as the one thing needful. Such individuals produce their effect by the very disgust they create among the ordinary respectable members of the community; they have the 'success of scandal.' Their criticism of the society to which they belong, and of all its institutions and modes of action and thought, attracts attention by the very violence and extravagance of the form in which they present it.

And the neglected truth or half-truth, which they thrust into exclusive prominence, gradually begins by their means to gain a hold of the minds of others, forces them to reconsider their cherished prejudices, and so leads to a real advance of thought. In this fashion the Cynic seems to have acted upon the ancient, as Rousseau did upon the modern world, as a disturbing, irritating challenge to it to vindicate itself—a challenge which was violently resented, but which awakened thought and in time produced a modification, and even a transformation of prevailing opinions. It might be likened to a ferment, which sets agoing a process of disintegration and reintegration, which ends in the destruction of an old, and the creation of a new form of human thought. Such one-sidedness may be weakness, and in the long run may be seen to be so; but for a time it gives an invasive strength which, especially when it is directed against an institution or mode of thinking that has begun to lose its vitality, is almost irresistible.

Antisthenes, the founder of the Cynic school, was a narrow, passionate soul, who took fire at the words of Socrates, words which were for him not so much a call to self-reflexion as a proclamation of revolt against the social and ethical standards of the time. The calm independence of the master, his hardy, temperate and almost ascetic life, his disregard for

opinion and his refusal to be turned from the course dictated by inward conviction, either by bribes or threats, by any of the rewards or penalties which society could offer or inflict, awakened the enthusiasm of Antisthenes. He was a ready recipient of the doctrine that the ends of the moral life must be self-determined, and not dictated by an external authority; and he understood the lesson in the most exclusive and individualistic sense, as meaning that each man must take the care of his own life upon himself, shape out his course by his own thought, and regard the State with all its customs and laws as a mere usurpation. In this spirit Antisthenes raised the banner of Nature against Convention, and met every claim of society upon the individual with contempt and derision.

But in so doing he really broke away from Socrates, exaggerating the negative part of his master's doctrine, that which threw the individual back upon himself, and neglecting altogether the positive part of it—that idea of the determination of the individual life by universal principles which, for Socrates, was the one thing needful in morality. Antisthenes was a thorough-going Nominalist, who maintained that the individual alone is real, and the universal nothing but a collective name. Following out this view, he held that, as things are quite isolated in their individuality, the only judgments that are true con-

cerning them must be tautological judgments, in which a thing is predicated of itself; for, if the predicate differs from the subject, then the judgment must be untrue when it asserts that the subject *is* the predicate. Hence in strict logic we can say nothing but 'A is A,' 'a man is a man.' Antisthenes, indeed, seems so far to have modified this doctrine as to admit that, when a thing is complex, you can define it by resolving it into its elements; but he maintained that when you have got down to these elements you can only name them. This, of course, involves that the whole of any complex thing is merely the sum of the parts.

It is easier to see the absurdity of this doctrine than to show why it is wrong; for, if it were true, we could have no significant predication or judgment whatever, a tautological judgment being in reality no judgment at all. It seems plausible enough to say that judgment asserts the identity of the predicate with the subject, and that it cannot be true, if they are in any way different. And, indeed, it is not long since a well-known school of formal logicians, not seeing where such a doctrine would lead them, proclaimed the law of identity in this sense as the essential law of thought, and maintained that all affirmative judgments must conform to the type 'A is A,' that is, to the type of tautology. But the truth is that the whole view of logic of which this is a part rests upon a confusion, which arises from

looking at one of the aspects of thought and neglecting the other. There can be no thought, no judgment or inference, unless there be an identity maintaining itself through the different aspects of things that are brought together in these processes: but, on the other hand, the identity must manifest itself in difference and overcome it, else it will mean nothing. We cannot say 'A is B,' unless there is an identity between both terms, one principle manifested in both and binding them together; but, if there were absolutely no difference between them, the judgment would not be worth making and would never be made. In any significant judgment the predicate must amplify the conception of the subject, though not in such a way as to destroy that conception. Thus every judgment forms a new conception out of the union of the subject and the predicate, with only the necessary change produced by their union.

Now the aim of Antisthenes is to discredit any philosophy that seeks to reach the true determination of the particular by means of the definition of the universal. In this he was, of course, striking directly at the principles and the method of his master Socrates. He seems, however, to have had specially in view the ideal theory of Plato, who maintained that it is only by rising to the universal that we come in sight of the reality which is hid under the particular appearances of sense. To Antisthenes this seemed nonsense;

for, on his view, the sole reality lies in the individual, which he supposes to be given in sense, and thought cannot possibly go beyond what is so given. To account for the particular by the universal was, in his view, as if one should seek to explain things by giving them a collective name, and then by pretending that there was some mysterious entity designated by this name, which was not in the particulars.

Now both Plato and Aristotle are particularly scornful when they come across this crude kind of Nominalism, which sees nothing in the world but a collection of isolated individuals. Thus Plato in the *Sophist* speaks of those who regard it as a feast of reason to be ever showing that the one cannot be many nor the many one. "You have met such people, Theaetetus, old fellows who have taken to philosophy late in life, who from poverty of thought are full of delight in such subtilties, and think that they have found in them the grand secret of philosophy."[1] Aristotle mentions Antisthenes by name as the maintainer of this doctrine, and declares that it showed him to be a man of no culture who did not understand dialectic. Still it is clear that Antisthenes was useful to Plato and Aristotle, at least as an irritant; for he stimulated them to develop their logical principles, and to show that thought moves not by identity alone, but by identity

[1] *Sophist*, 251 c.

in difference. Aristotle, indeed, lays more stress on the individuality of the real than Plato, but he gives as little countenance as Plato to the abstract nominalism which would reduce the world to a mere aggregation of individual substances.

The Cynics, however, were primarily bent upon practice and not upon theory; and the dialectical defence of individualism was valuable to Antisthenes mainly as a support to his ethical views, and especially to his attempt to isolate the individual and maintain his independence, his natural freedom and self-sufficiency. Indeed, to Antisthenes, the autonomy of the individual, his independence of everything but himself, seemed of itself to constitute that supreme good which Socrates had taught him to seek. "Virtue is sufficient for happiness," he declared, "and all that it needs is the Socratic vigour" (ἰσχὺς Σωκρατική). Antisthenes may rightfully claim to be the first of the enthusiasts for 'formal freedom,' that is, for a freedom which is nothing but the negation of bondage—the assertion of the self against everything that is regarded as belonging to the not-self, the demand of the individual to be his own law and his own end. To such a temper of mind, every claim of society upon the individual, every custom or law or authority that demands the slightest deference from him, seems to be an outrage; and outrage must be met with outrage. The Cynic, therefore, is in a continual attitude of

protest against what is conventional or artificial; and to him the whole order of social life, every rule of morals or manners, or even of decency, seems to be conventional and artificial. He proclaims the watchword: 'Return to nature,' with all the dangerous ambiguities that have attached themselves to that phrase. For, while nature is set up as the type to which man is led by reason to conform himself, yet it is apt to be taken, not as meaning the ideal to which his development points as its goal, but that which is earliest and most elementary in its existence, as opposed to that which is later (that which is later being assumed to be imported from without). In this way the Cynic seeks the true man in the child, the savage, or even the animal; and the return to nature means for him the repudiation of all civilisation, of all that is due to education or social discipline. This is the fatal circle which moral speculation has trodden again and again from the time of Antisthenes down to that of Rousseau; and in which the attempt to get rid of what is adventitious and unnecessary, to free life from artificial adjuncts, and to get down to the basal facts of existence, converts itself into an effort to strip man of every veil that hides the nakedness of the animal.[1]

[1] Cf. the words of King Lear about the naked Edgar: "Ha! here's three on's are sophisticated! Thou art the thing itself: unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings! Come, unbutton here."

But this is not all. The Cynic sets up the standard of revolt against all social pressure, as trenching upon the native liberty of man: but, in the strange weakness of this merely negative attitude, the Cynic is found to have his own *raison d'être* just in that very society against which he protests, and without antagonism to which his own life would be empty and meaningless. His independence is an inverted dependence; his pride and contempt for others are in essence one with the servility that hunts for their suffrages. "I see your vanity," said Socrates to Antisthenes, "through the holes in your coat." The Cynics are a crucial example and illustration of the law that men inspired by a one-sided theory and carrying it out unflinchingly to all its consequences, end in becoming a living demonstration of its absurdity. They supply, as it were, the *corpus vile* on which the experiment is made that exhibits the impossibility of an emancipation that is merely negative. They seek to make men free by breaking the ties that bind them to their fellowmen, to the objects of their desires, and to everything that is not themselves. But with every tie they break, with every relation they repudiate, their own life becomes poorer. In rejecting what seems to them the bondage of the State, they give up all the intellectual and moral discipline, all the culture and refinement of manners, all the opportunity for the

exercise of human faculty, which made Plato and Aristotle prize the civic life so highly. Refusing to weaken themselves by luxury, because it enslaves men to outward things, they end in counting everything a luxury which man can exist without, that is to say, everything except the satisfaction of the barest sensuous wants. And, after all, they find that man is bound to the world he would escape as firmly as ever, though now only by the vulgar tie of appetite. They thus discover that there can be no end to what they regard as the servitude of the self to the not-self, except in the extinction of the life they would emancipate. And indeed many of the Cynics, having reduced life to its beggarly elements, were ready to throw it away. Death is the only negative freedom; but bare death is not the emancipation of man from natural forces, rather it is their final triumph over him. There is, however, another aspect of the case. The real interest which fills the life of the Cynic, and in which his happiness consists, lies not, of course, in the necessaries of life to which he confines himself, but in the assertion of himself as against the political and social claims upon him. It is not, therefore, that he really excludes the ordinary interests of life, but that he takes them in a negative way. His very contempt and hatred binds him to that which he despises and hates. But he fails to recognise that such contempt and hatred needs

the objects against which it is directed, and that, without such objects, it would have nothing to spend itself upon. Thus, after all, the Cynic is a parasite upon the society he repudiates, and that just because he lives to defy and insult it.

Still, in spite of all this, we must recognise that there was an element of truth wrapped up in Cynicism, and this gave it an undoubted power over a certain class of minds. The negative idea of independence may be false and self-contradictory when it is divorced from any positive idea, but it has a real value as an element in the truth. There is a sense in which the 'return to nature' and the repudiation of luxury constitute the conditions of any healthy morality. And the Cynics, in denouncing the artificiality of the Greek State and the whole framework of society connected therewith, might be regarded as defending the integrity of the moral life. For it is true that, in one aspect of it, the civilisation of Greece was an artificial product, based on the social privilege of a slave-holding aristocracy, and, therefore, upon injustice to human nature in the persons of their slaves. Hence also its morality was partial and one-sided, not the universal law of duty but the code of honour of a class, whose honour stood 'rooted in the dishonour' of others. It was no little thing that, in the face of such a civilisation and such a morality, there should be men who main-

tained the dignity of labour, condemned the false glories of war, denounced the prejudices of class and race, and maintained that the only true State is the πολιτεία τοῦ κόσμου, the community of all men. But in the Cynic expression of these truths there is often a crudity and violence which seems to show that they were not appreciated in their highest meaning, that they were grasped as weapons to throw at the enemy rather than as expressions of positive truth. "Follow philosophy till you regard the generals of armies as leaders of asses." "I would rather be mad than feel pleasure." "Why should a man be proud, like the Athenians, of being sprung from the soil with the worms and snails." "The most noble of all things is παρρησία, the power to speak out freely what we think." Are these sentences expressions of righteous horror at war, of genuine temperance and self-control, of a regard for humanity which reaches beyond patriotism, of a simple resolve to speak the truth at all hazards? Or are they the utterance of a bitter wrath against the pleasures and ambitions of others, of a vulgar hatred and jealousy of superiority either in birth or culture, and of a desire for the utmost license of intemperate speech? We can only say that the good and evil are so inextricably mingled together that we are bound to take the one with the other in our estimate. But we are bound also to recognise that the Cynics in their condemnation of the limited

aristocratic State and of the culture and refinement that went with it, were truer prophets than Plato and Aristotle, who spent their great philosophic genius in trying to regenerate a form of social and political life which mankind had outgrown.

Now in the Stoic philosophy all these ambiguities are cleared up. Stoicism is Cynicism enlarged, deepened, idealised, freed from the violence and exaggeration of men who were outlaws and rebels against the social system under which they lived, and transformed into the calm strength of a rational faith. This may partly be explained by the history of the founder of the Stoic school. Zeno got his first initiation into philosophy from Crates the Cynic, and his whole system bore such distinct traces of the Cynic teaching that he was said to have written his works on the dog's tail (an untranslatable pun). But while he absorbed the lesson of the Cynic, we are told that he was repelled by the Cynic's outrages upon taste and decency: repelled also, we may fairly add, by his narrowness and hostility to culture. To this, however, Zeno found a corrective in the teaching of another of the Socratic schools; for we hear that he studied not only under Crates, but also under Stilpo, the Megarian. Now the peculiarity of the Megarian school was that it had developed the principles of Socrates in a diametrically opposite direction to that

in which they were developed by the Cynics. To use the terms of later philosophy, the Megarians were extreme Realists as the Cynics were extreme Nominalists. Socrates had laid great stress on the importance of general notions, and had maintained that it is only when we grasp and define the universal that we can rightly judge of the particular. Thus he might seem to have given countenance to that tendency to exalt the universal at the expense of the particular, which is supposed to have led Plato to attribute absolute reality to the former and to treat the latter as an illusive appearance. But Plato, as we have seen, soon became aware of the danger of this exaggeration, the danger of losing difference in unity and treating abstractions as the only realities; and, at least in his later writings, he insisted on the equal importance of analysis and synthesis. The founder of the Megarian school, on the other hand, being a man of subtle rather than comprehensive intelligence, possessed with the Platonic desire for unity without the Platonic desire for systematic completeness, fell early into the trap of abstraction from which Plato escaped. He set the one against the many, the universal against the particular; and he even went so far in this direction as to revive the abstract doctrine of the Eleatics,—though the influence of Socrates led him to call the absolute unity in which all

difference is lost by the name of the Good, and also, we may add, to think of it not as a material but as an ideal principle. Moreover, like the later Eleatics, the Megarians devoted all their dialectical skill to the task of showing that multiplicity and change are essentially contradictory, and must, therefore, be mere illusive appearances.

But their doctrine became in this way the opposite counterpart of that of the Cynics. They maintained the exclusive reality of the abstract universal, as the Cynics maintained the exclusive reality of the abstract individual; and while the Cynics set up the independence of the individual as the end of all action, the Megarians taught that the end was to be found in a pantheistic absorption in the Absolute, an extinction of all personal feeling in the contemplation of the One. But 'extremes meet,' —in the sense that when we entirely isolate them from each other and annul all positive relation between them, their negative relation also disappears, and they reach the same end by opposite roads. Thus the Cynic and the Megarian agree in denying the truth of any judgment which is not tautological; because to admit that the universal can be truly predicated of the individual would be to the Cynic inconsistent with the self-identity and independence of the individual, and to the Megarian inconsistent with the absolute unity and reality of

the universal. And, if we consider their respective views of ethics, we can see that the self-centred freedom of the Cynic, to whom any desire or affection that went beyond himself would be slavery, has in it something closely akin to the apathy of the Megarian. It is a curious fact that this community of the two doctrines was already recognised by Stilpo, the Megarian teacher of Zeno, who, therefore, is sometimes called a Cynic, and who may possibly have suggested to Zeno the idea that a higher result might be reached by a combination of the doctrines of the two schools, in which he had received his philosophical education.

Be that as it may, it is the fact that Zeno, looking at the Cynic philosophy with the eyes of a Megarian, and at the Megarian philosophy with the eyes of a Cynic, rose to the conception of a system in which these two theories, which appeared to be diametrical opposites of each other, were united and reconciled. The originality of Zeno consisted mainly in this one illuminating thought—that the individualism of the Cynics and the pantheism of the Megarians, the sensationalism of the Cynics and the idealism of the Megarians, the materialism of the Cynics and the intellectualism of the Megarians, were not really contradictory, but were rather complementary aspects of one truth. The possibility of this union of opposites and the self-consistency of the philosophy

founded upon it, we shall have to consider hereafter. But, in the first place, I wish to point out how by this change the spirit, tone, and temper of Stoicism became entirely different from that of Cynicism, and even sharply contrasted with it. For the Cynic school was, as we have seen, almost exclusively occupied with the negative side of its philosophic creed. Its activity was absorbed in the manifestation of its scorn and hatred for the institutions and principles of a society which seemed to it to stand in the way of the free development of the individuality of man; and by the inevitable recoil, it became imprisoned in its own negations, and the half-truth which it grasped was almost turned into a falsehood by the exaggeration of its expression. For the Stoic, on the other hand, the doctrine of independence ceased to be a doctrine of revolt, and became a positive consciousness of the dignity of man as a rational being. The self-concentration—the consciousness of being a law to himself and subjected to no external authority, of being an end to himself and not a means to the ends of any other being or society without him—remained to the Stoic as his inheritance from the Cynic. But he had learned from the Megarian that the reason which made him a true individual, an independent self, was at the same time a universal principle, the principle of a life common to him with all other rational beings and

uniting him to them all. Withdrawing into himself from all the entanglements of life, from all the special connexions of society, and realising to the full his individual selfhood and his separation from every other thing or being, he found that, when most alone, he was least alone, and that just in the inmost secret of his soul, he was at one with all mankind.

But in this way the Stoic had discovered that the deepest, and, in a sense, the most individual experiences of humanity are also the most universal. It is what is particular, the special characteristics of the individual and the race, the special traditions of each family and nation, the special disposition and tendencies of each man, that hold us apart and make us incomprehensible to each other; but when we get down to the root of humanity, to the self-consciousness that makes us men, we find that our differences have been left behind or have become transparent, and that the language spoken by each individual is intelligible to all. The inmost secret of each man's heart is the secret of the whole world, and if we only go deep enough, we can evoke an echo in every breast. Hence it is just the greatest poets, those whose range of thought and feeling is widest, who are secure of a welcome everywhere; while those who express the special sentiments of any nation or class cannot be understood beyond their country and time, except by elaborate study and

preparation. It is this apparent paradox that the most individual is the most universal, which the Stoics brought to light, and by means of which they, as I have said, changed the whole tone and temper of earlier individualism. While, therefore, the strengthening power of the Cynic doctrine, the 'Socratic vigour,' was not lost, while the Stoics were able to show on many occasions that they found in their philosophy a spring of energy which could lift them above fear and desire, and which could be corrupted or intimidated neither by public opinion nor by the earthly omnipotence of the Roman Imperial power; yet they were not, in the first instance, occupied with resistance or revolt against outward authority or influence, but with the effort to rule their own spirits, to live a life of moral freedom, and to die without doing dishonour to humanity in their own persons. And, in spite of their condemnation of the general tendencies of the society around them, and their resolution to live in independence of it as of everything merely external, their attitude to the world was not primarily antagonistic. On the contrary, they held that the very principle which gives the individual an absolute claim against other men, also obliges him to recognise the same claims in them; and that the same reason which makes him an individual, self-determining being, unites him to all beings like himself—or, at

least, would unite him to them, if he and they were to become what, as rational, they potentially are. Hence it is to the philosophy of the Stoics that we owe the watchword of humanity: *Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto;* and, indeed, it is also to them we owe it that the word humanity has the double sense of the adjectives 'human' and 'humane.' Thus the Cynic's self-assertion against society is turned into a consciousness of membership in the great *civitas communis deorum et hominum.* And if this universal community remain with the Stoics only an aspiration and does not become a reality, if it be at best a dream of the distant future rather than a consciousness of any actual or possible object of present endeavour, yet even the idea of it did much to break down the barriers between mankind. In short, in passing from Cynicism to Stoicism, we are passing from a self-sufficiency which is all-exclusive to one that, in idea at least, is all-inclusive; and the Stoic philanthropy, if it had not the invasive energy of Christian charity, yet carried with it a comprehensive sympathy, which softened the bitterness of national and personal prejudice and prepared the way for the religion of humanity.

And this leads me to speak of another point which is of special interest to anyone who seeks to trace the evolution of theology. The Cynic philosophy, as it broke off the community of man with

man and of man with the world, was, at least in its most prominent aspect, the very negation of religion. In arming man against his fellows, it also armed him against heaven. Its self-sufficiency was the contradictory of all obedience or loyalty to any power above the individual. But for the Stoic it is quite otherwise. Freedom from the law without is at once recognised as binding the individual to obedience to the law within; and as the Stoic thinks of this inner law as absolute, he cannot but believe that the whole world is subjected to it. Hence in obeying his own nature, he is conscious that he is in harmony with the law of the universe, —a law which all things obey, but which it is the privilege only of rational beings to know, and to make into the conscious rule of their own lives. They alone can see that the world is the manifestation of the same reason that speaks within them, and they are therefore able to identify their own freedom with submission to a divine law and service to a divine purpose. *Deo parere libertas est.*

From the first, Stoicism was a religious philosophy, as is shown by the great hymn of Cleanthes, the successor of Zeno as head of the school—a hymn which is inspired by the consciousness that it is one spiritual power which penetrates and controls the universe and is the source of every

work done under the sun, "except what evil men endeavour in their folly." Man alone is of pure divine race,[1] and he alone is able to accept or to resist the divine will—though, after all, his resistance is naught, being in contradiction with his own nature, as well as with the nature of the universe and of God. "Lead me, O Zeus, and thou, O Destiny, in the work to which I am divinely chosen, and I shall follow, not unwilling; but even if I refuse and become evil, no less must I follow thee." Thus the moral independence of the Stoic converts itself into a consciousness of unity with God, in which all caprice and wilfulness are lost; and the individual becomes strong in himself simply as he becomes conscious that he is the organ of the divine will. Stoicism may not be successful in dealing with all the difficulties of the question of man's freedom, or in solving the antinomy which arises when we consider his position as, on the one hand, a self-conscious, self-determining *ego*, and on the other, a finite individual who is only a part of an infinite whole, and whose self-determination cannot be conceived as breaking up its unity. But it is fair to say that Stoicism first brought the two terms of the problem face to face with each other and indicated the line in which

[1] τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν—the words quoted by St. Paul in his address to the Athenians (Acts xvii. 28).

alone a solution can be sought. How can morality and religion, free self-determination and absolute self-surrender to God be united with each other? This henceforward becomes one of the fundamental questions of the philosophy of religion. And the answer to it can only be found, if it be found at all, in the conception of the fundamental unity of man's nature with the divine. Thus the Stoics both set the problem of freedom, and showed in what direction the solution of it was to be sought.

LECTURE SEVENTEENTH.

THE STOIC SYNTHESIS OF PANTHEISM AND INDIVIDUALISM.

In the last lecture I have shown how Zeno, just because he grasped the essential relation between the two opposed philosophies of the Cynics and Megarians, became the founder of a new philosophy. He was a man of much less speculative power than Plato or Aristotle; yet by this synthesis he rose to an idea which neither of them had attained, the idea of the unity of the consciousness of self—that consciousness which makes a man an individual in a sense in which no other animal is individual—with the universal principle which binds all things and beings together as parts of one world. We cannot, indeed, say that Zeno realised this idea in all its bearings; but it took possession of him, and gave inspiration and direction to his own philosophy and that of all his school. In this principle lay at once the strength and the weakness of Stoicism: its

strength, in so far as it overcame the dualistic tendencies which had affected Greek thought from the time of Anaxagoras; and its weakness, in so far as it achieved this result rather by intuition than by explicit reason. Hence it was not able fully to master and reconcile the different elements which it brought together: what it did was simply to identify them and to ignore their antagonism.

Stoicism was essentially what is called a *Monism*: and in so far as it was this, it had a kind of rationality which no dualistic system can ever possess. For any system that, directly or indirectly, denies the unity of the world, may be shown ultimately to lead to the denial that it is an intelligible world at all. How, indeed, can the universe be a κόσμος, or intelligible system, if all the existences included in it be not essentially related to each other, if they be not constituent parts of one whole? To understand anything is to see its distinction from other things; but distinction always implies relation, and relation presupposes a unity within which the related elements are contained. Hence if we try to isolate anything—to conceive it apart from all distinction and relation we make it unintelligible. To understand a thing is to give it a place in the one world of experience which exists for the one self; and to suppose that unity to be broken up and divided, is equivalent to the negation at once of the intelligence and its object.

Hence it has been said with good reason that it is the beginning of true philosophy to realise that all differences and oppositions of thought and reality are relative differences—differences within a unity, and that the very idea of an absolute difference is suicidal: for it is only as its terms are held together within a whole and so related to each other, that their difference has any meaning. This, indeed, was just the lesson to be learnt from the treatment of judgment by the Cynic and Megarian schools; for what they had really shown was that the judgment reduces itself to a tautology, if it does not express the relation of the universal to the particular. And this again implies that both the universal and the particular lose their meaning, if they are taken out of relation to each other. The truth of either can only be discovered, in so far as it is recognised that in their distinction they do not cease to be elements in one whole. In this way, again, we are led to recognise the systematic or organic unity of reality as the first principle or presupposition of all knowledge.

Now Zeno clearly perceived the negative side of this truth, and by his perception of it he was enabled to make a great advance beyond his predecessors, and to free himself from the dualistic presuppositions which had embarrassed their theories. Unfortunately, as I have already indicated, he could not discover a logical way of bridging the gulf between the opposites,

or of admitting a relative difference where he denied an absolute one. Hence his monism means only that he identifies the extremes, or treats the distinction between them as simply a distinction of different points of view from which we look at the same thing—points of view which we may take up and dismiss according to the convenience of the moment. Thus Stoicism, on a superficial view of it, seems to be the most confused of all the philosophies: a philosophy which clings to the idea of the unity of all things, but which in its exposition of that unity passes abruptly from materialism to spiritualism, from individualism to pantheism, from sensationalism to idealism, as the occasion may require, and without any consciousness of the difficulty of the transition so made. From this point of view, Stoicism might be regarded as a jumble of all the philosophies or, to use Kant's expression, as a "nest of contradictions," in which every way of conceiving things is represented, and none is carried out to its ultimate consequences.

Yet there is another point of view from which Stoicism might be described as the most logical of all theories, in so far as it persistently keeps hold of one definite principle and purpose, and makes everything else bend to it. For the one object upon which it concentrates all its efforts is to give unity to man's life, a unity which nothing can come from without to disturb. Further, it realises that this unity cannot

be attained by the way of exclusion, or by shutting out from the individual life everything that is not a part of it, but only by widening it so that it may embrace all things. To give unity to the life of man, it is necessary to conceive the world of which he is a part as itself a unity. Stoicism, therefore, insists that no difference in the mind, or in its objects, or between the two, shall be taken as absolute; and as, after all, it is unable either to resolve the differences or to explain them away, it tramples them under foot. It is thus speculatively feeble, and its particular explanations of difficulties are too often superficial and sometimes even inconsistent with each other. But its general philosophical doctrine does not rest on these, but on its unswerving conviction, its intense certitude, that there is a unity and an ideal meaning in things, which answers to the demands of our reason. This truth the Stoic grasps with resolute faith, even when he cannot logically apply it to the solution of particular difficulties, and it makes him easily satisfied with any ratiocination, however external, that seems to remove them. Stoicism, from this point of view, may be regarded as a bold stroke for a monistic and optimistic view of the universe, made at a time when everything external seemed to point to dualism and pessimism, and when, we may add, the speculative power to deal with such a problem was altogether wanting. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant maintains that the

understanding of man is quite incapable of realising the ideal which is set up for him by his reason; and whatever exception may be taken to such a view, as an account of the powers of the human mind, it very well describes the position of the Stoic philosophers. They had grasped very firmly the ideal after which philosophy strives, but they were able to do little towards its realisation. Their contribution to the solution of the problems of philosophy is not great, but throughout the whole history of the school they held to one central principle. It must, indeed, be admitted that under the severe criticism to which the Stoic doctrine was subjected by the Academic school, some of the Stoics of the middle period, the contemporaries of Cicero, made inconsistent modifications in their system, and even fell back on something like the dualism of Plato. But Epictetus, one of the latest and greatest of the Stoics, is in his general attitude of thought quite faithful to the teachings of the original heads of the school, and especially to its monistic principle.[1] In truth, Stoicism could not renounce this principle without losing a great part of its moral strength and efficiency. The enormous influence which it exerted over the mind of the ancient world, its power to strengthen the souls of the noblest men for action and endurance, lay in its firm grasp of this central idea, that there is a

[1] See especially Bonhöffer, *Epictet und die Stoa.*

rational principle in the world, which is one in nature with the self-conscious intelligence within us, and that, through all apparent disorder, this principle is inevitably realising itself. And this also explains how Stoic ideas became so easily blended with the nascent reflexion of the early church, and exercised so powerful an influence on the development of Christian doctrine.

The physical philosophy of the Stoics consists mainly in the development of the monistic view of existence, in opposition to the dualism that separated form and matter. It is often stated that the Stoics were materialists; but the truth which underlies this charge is, that they altogether rejected the dualism which had maintained itself in Greek philosophy from the time of Anaxagoras. The Stoics could not be content with any philosophy which divided heaven from earth, the spiritual from the material, which, in short, divided the ideal reality which we grasp in thought from the things which we touch and see. There is in them something of the same impulse which makes St. John insist upon the actual presence of the divine Lord in human form, in opposition to the Docetism which reduced his humanity to a semblance—"that which our eyes have seen and our hands have handled of the Word of life." Or, to take a more exact parallel, they rebelled against the idea of a transcendent God and a transcendent ideal world as

modern thought has rebelled against the supernaturalism of medieval religion and philosophy. The ideas of Plato and the forms of Aristotle seemed to them far off and unreal, and they declared against them in the same spirit in which Goethe repudiated the idea of a God who worked upon the universe from without (*ein Gott der nur von aussen stiesse*), and was not immanently present in nature and in the soul of man. Just as Spinoza spoke of God and nature as two words for the same thing, and maintained the identity of the one divine substance which is presented to us under the two disparate attributes of thought and extension, so the Stoics refused to divorce, or even to distinguish, mind and matter, or to exalt the soul by opposing it to the body. Hence they asserted that nothing exists which is not corporeal or material, though they immediately qualified this statement by maintaining that there is nothing corporeal which is passive or inert, and that all activity implies a *Logos* or spiritual principle. The absolute antagonism of a purely active form and a purely passive matter, which is the crux of the Aristotelian philosophy, is thus set aside; and in its place we have the relative opposition of two elements, both of which are regarded as having ultimately the same nature and origin, and both of which are viewed as in one aspect material and in another spiritual. When, therefore, the Stoics are called materialists, we

have to remember that they can be so regarded only from the point of view of a dualistic philosophy, which holds that in order to be spiritual, reality must be absolutely dissociated from that which is corporeal or material. On the same ground, we might as legitimately apply the term materialist to Spinoza or Goethe: for Spinoza maintained that extension and thought are only different attributes under which the same principle is revealed to us, and Goethe refused to think of God except as realising himself under the forms of sense, or of the material world except as the 'living garment of Deity.' In fact, the Pantheism of these later writers is closely akin to that of the Stoics, who assert, from one point of view, that the universe is a product or manifestation of divine reason, and, from another, that all things flow from and return to the fiery breath, the *πνεῦμα διάπυρον*, which is the quintessence of all matter.

And this enables us to understand why, in seeking a metaphysical basis for their philosophy, the Stoics should go back not to Plato and Aristotle, but to Heraclitus, a philosopher who lived before the opposition of idealism and materialism had been formulated, and who therefore easily passed from one form of expression to the other without any consciousness of transition. Thus Heraclitus could speak of the secular process of the universe as the evolution of all things out of an ever-living fire and their return to it again,

without being hindered from also regarding it as the manifestation of the supreme thought or reason, the γνώμη or λόγος that 'steers all things through all things.' He could even say without any sense of violence that the fiery heaven which embraces all things is full of mind and reason (λογικὸν καὶ φρενῆρες). At the same time, we must recognise the essential difference between the position of those who lived before the two elements had been distinguished, and the position of those who lived after this distinction had been so much insisted on by Plato and Aristotle. For those who, in this later time, refused to accept the dualistic theory there were only two logical alternatives: either to explain away one of the two principles, or to show that their opposition is merely relative, an opposition within a unity. But the Stoics could not adopt either of these alternatives. They were too anxious to grasp the whole truth to be content with abstract materialism or abstract spiritualism; yet, though they saw the weakness of such partial explanations, and had an intuitive perception of a unity beyond them, they could not bring them together as correlated factors of one complete system. Being thus unable either to admit that the opposition was absolute or to transcend it, they were driven to the alternative of simply denying it, except as an opposition of different aspects of the same thing, and falling back on the ideas of a philosopher who had lived

before it was recognised. Matter and mind, therefore, appear in the Stoic as in the Spinozistic philosophy, as two parallel aspects or attributes of one substance. And though the Stoics are not so careful as Spinoza in marking off from each other the two lines of speculation which are thus opened up, according as we look at reality under the one or the other attribute, yet it is possible in their writings to trace out each line almost without relation to the other.

On the material side then, the world, according to the Stoic view of it, may be thus described. In the first place, the idea of a purely passive matter is rejected, and we have in its place a corporeal nature whose ultimate and most active form is a fiery breath *πνεῦμα διάπυρον*, or, as Cicero translates it, *anima inflammata*, a kind of quintessence of matter, which unites the activity of fire with the diffusiveness of air. This fiery breath, again, evolves from itself the opposition of two relatively active and two relatively passive principles—fire and air on the one side, earth and water on the other—which stand to each other as do form and matter in the Aristotelian system, though the Stoics conceive the opposition as a relative and not an absolute one. Out of these elements all the particular existences in the world are produced. In every existence there is a fiery principle of unity, which holds it together and keeps it in tension against the other existences that

might invade or destroy it. But this tension, this power of self-assertion and self-maintenance in all finite things, is limited, and only capable of holding out for a certain time. The Stoic, therefore, maintains that there is a kind of circular process of existence, in which all things that emerge from the central fire ultimately return to it again. The movement of expansion and differentiation is followed by a movement of contraction or integration, in which all things are drawn back into the 'fiery breath' or spirit from which they were originally derived. The central fire at last reclaims all that it has given out, even that purest portion of itself which constitutes the soul of man.

Again, all this material process has to be translated into idealistic or spiritualistic terms; for the fiery breath is also conceived by the Stoics as a 'germinative reason' which produces and penetrates the whole world by its thought. And from it are derived the 'germinative reasons' which are the principles of unity in all the different forms of finite existence. Thus in inorganic things the germinative reason takes the form of a dominating quality (ἕξις); in plants it appears as a 'nature' or principle of organisation; in animals as a 'soul' or principle of sensation and appetite; and in man it rises to its highest form as a 'rational soul,' which is a pure reflex of the divine reason. While, therefore, we are able to say that all

things are derived from the germinative reason of the world, we can say this in a special sense of the soul of man, which immediately partakes of the nature of God, and may even be described as a part of Him, directly communicated to one privileged creature (*divinae particula aurae*). And this is shown by the fact that it not only is a principle of unity in human life, but is directly conscious of itself as such. Thus, just as God is the ruling principle in the universe, sustaining, penetrating, and subduing all things to himself, so the inner self or ruling principle in man binds his whole existence into one, and subordinates all his other powers to itself. Yet we must not, in either case, make too much of the opposition between that which rules and that which is ruled; for the Stoic always remembers that this distinction is relative. God is not to be regarded as really separate from the world; and the particular existences on which he is said to act are all modifications, or, we might even say, parts of himself. And in like manner, in man also, the senses and desires, over which the ruling power or inner self has command, are, after all, only emanations of the ruling power itself, and not really external to it. As God realises himself and only himself in the world, so it is the *ego* and the *ego* alone that realises itself in all the powers of sensation and desire. And we may add that, just as, in the secular process of the universe, all existences spring from God,

and are again resolved into His pure essence; so with man, life is a process of expansion, which is followed by a process of contraction, ending in the disappearance of all the other powers of the soul in the ruling part, and the separation of the soul from the body. And even this is only a preparation for the final consummation, in which the soul returns to the divine unity from which it came.

Now we need not farther dwell on the physical or materialistic side of this process, the evolution of the world out of the central fire and its resolution into it again. The general theory is borrowed from Heraclitus, and the Stoics added to it nothing of importance; or rather, we should say, that they sacrificed whatever meaning it had as a physical theory in the effort to carry out the parallelism of matter and mind. Thus, while they maintained that all things are corporeal, they found themselves obliged to assert that matter is essentially active, and even to admit the possibility of a complete inter-penetration of material bodies by each other, and of all matter by the etherial fire. In other words, in order to be the counterpart of mind, matter had to give up its essential nature as extended and solid, as consisting of *partes extra partes* which repel each other. Hence the physical theories of the Stoics may be at once set aside as having no scientific value; as, indeed, for them the material world had no real interest except

as a part of man's life. Or perhaps we should rather say, that their interest was confined to the general doctrine that matter and mind are distinguished only as different aspects of the same thing, and that, this being granted, they cared nothing about the nature of special physical processes. And as time went on, they gradually ceased to concern themselves with physical subjects, except as supplying certain postulates which were necessary for their ethics. Thus the only important part of their physical philosophy came to be that which should rather be called metaphysics or theology, the part which has to do, not with the relations of physical phenomena to each other, but only with the relations of the material universe to God, who is at once the central fire and the spiritual principle to which all things are referred.

When we have got thus far, it becomes easy to see that the kernel or central meaning of the Stoic system lies in the combination of two ideas, which appear at once to be essentially opposed, and yet necessarily related to each other. The *first* is the idea of the self-centred individuality of the particular things and beings that make up the universe, and above all of man as a self-conscious being. The *second* is the idea of the unity of the universe as a whole, as the realisation of the one divine principle which makes the individuality of all particular things and beings, and even the individuality

of man himself, into its expressions and instruments. In the antithesis and the synthesis of these two ideas lies the whole interest of Stoicism.

As to the first of these ideas, I have already said that the world is to the Stoic an aggregate of individual things and beings, each of which is an efflux from the principle of the whole, and in a sense a whole in itself; in other words, each of them has in it a principle of unity with itself, which renders it an individual, separate from and opposed to all other individuals. And with this individuality goes in each case the natural impulse of self-preservation—what Spinoza calls the *conatus in suo esse perseverandi*, the effort to maintain and augment its own being. This individuality appears in more intensive forms as we rise in the scale of being, but only in man does it reach self-consciousness. And this, indeed, makes so marked a distinction between men and other animals that we might fairly say that he alone has a self in him. The ruling power of reason so dominates over his nature that he cannot be described as anything but a self-conscious *ego*; and, just because of this, all his impulses become concentrated in one great effort after self-realisation, in which he shows a high-strung energy wherewith nothing else in nature can be brought into comparison. In him the *conatus in suo esse perseverandi* swells into an absolute

demand for happiness, for a perfect completion and manifestation of his rational being, in which nothing shall be left to be wished or hoped for.

Only—and here the Stoic decisively parts company with the Cynic—the self-seeking impulse, as it becomes self-conscious, must recognise its own universal character. The impulse of a rational being, as such, is not to seek the gratification of its particular impulses; it is to seek to satisfy the self. Nor is it even to seek to satisfy the self as one particular being, in opposition to other particular beings. To think so would be to forget the universal nature of the self, which lifts man above his own individuality, and enables him to identify himself with the whole and with its divine principle. The Stoic, therefore, in seeking his true self or its good, must detach himself from his immediate life and all its special interests. He must look upon the fate of his own particular being with the same calmness and freedom from disturbance, with which he contemplates the fates of other beings altogether unconnected with himself. For what he must desire is to realise himself as reason, and reason is equally related to all objects, but not bound up with any one of them except in so far as it is a manifestation of rational principles.

This doctrine gives us the means of reconciling the self-seeking of man with that to which it seems

directly opposed, the realisation of the divine principle which binds the universe into one whole. Every thing and every being springs from this principle, and nothing can be taken as capable of opposing it. There is no 'matter' in the Aristotelian sense, to limit its realisation of itself; and the idea that any particular finite creature should interfere with its self-determined course is essentially absurd and self-contradictory. As the original unity is the source of all and immanent in all, it dominates with irresistible energy over all, and turns their efforts to realise *themselves* into a means of realising *itself*. Man alone, in virtue of his self-consciousness, can conceive the idea of separation from it or resistance to it. But this means only that he has the choice whether he will be a willing or an unwilling servant of it: unwilling, if he makes it his aim to satisfy his particular self—an aim which he can attain only so far as the general system of things allows him; willing, if he identifies himself with the divine reason which is manifested in that system. His only prerogative, therefore, is that he can freely accept the service of the whole, which he must serve whether he will or not. *Fata volentem ducunt, nolentem trahunt.* The world is one world, and the idea of escaping from the unity on which its existence rests is futile. The wish to escape, indeed, could only arise in the mind of a rational being through ignorance of what he, as well

as of what it, is. For if he understood these two things, he could not but see that his own good can lie in nothing but the realisation of reason, and that the world-process is nothing but this realisation.

Now to appreciate the strength and the weakness of this view, we must recall the way in which it was attained. It was attained, as we saw, through an immediate perception of the truth that the same reason which makes man individual—because it makes him conscious of a self—at the same time lifts him above the point of view of his own individuality. The *ego* that is conscious of all things in relation to itself is, as such, impartial; it separates itself from all objects alike, even from its own particular being, and looks at them all with equal eyes. It takes up a central point of view in reference to the whole world it knows, and is thus capable of estimating all things according to their place in the whole, without reference to the special feelings, sensations, prejudices, impulses which belong to it as this individual. This point of view is essential to man as a rational and therefore also as a moral being; for knowledge and moral action are possible only if, and so far as, we can discount the speciality of our own feelings and desires. The ὁρμή, the essential *nisus* or impulse of rational beings, as such, is to see all things in their proper relation to the whole, and in all their actions

to make themselves the organs and instruments of the principle of that whole.

Now, to this view it is naturally objected that reason in man does not show itself to be such a universal and impartial power of judgment as the Stoic describes. Rather we seem to find the views and aims of men always subjected to distortion and limitation by their national and individual character and circumstances. In their thought they are influenced by illusions and prejudices due to racial or individual bias, or to the peculiar experiences of their lives; not even in their highest intellectual efforts do we find them rising to a quite impartial and objective view of things. And in their practical conduct also they are continually misled by interests and desires, which prevent them from devoting themselves to any object independent of their individuality, and still more from acting with a single eye to the highest and most universal good. All this is obvious enough, but it is not inconsistent with the general truth of the Stoic doctrine—the doctrine that it is the essential characteristic of a rational being to look beyond himself, and both in theory and in practice to rise above his own individuality. For it is clear that if any man were utterly incapable of taking up a general point of view, or of looking at himself as an object just as he looks at other persons and things; if he were absolutely

imprisoned in his own sensations, and were not able to make any allowance for their individual character or to regard them as he regards the sensations of others: if, in short, the world were centred for him in his own particular self, he would be literally insane. Similarly, if in action, he were quite unable to regard anything but his own impulses, and could not direct his will to any objective ends whatsoever or submit it to any general laws or social obligations, he would be a moral idiot; and we should be obliged to treat him as an irresponsible animal. Hence, in spite of all that is irrational and immoral in man's life, we must regard the reason that makes him man as essentially universal, that is, as a consciousness of self in relation to other beings and things as parts of one whole—a consciousness which, even while it constitutes his individuality, takes him beyond it. For to be a self, in spite of the apparent paradox, is to go beyond the self; and a human being cannot find a centre in himself, except so far as he recognises himself as part of a wider whole in which he is centred.

At the same time—and this is what the Stoics in their abstract way of looking at things altogether fail to observe—the existence of this potential universality of reason in every rational being is one thing, and the conscious realisation of it in all the extent of its meaning is another. If we appeal to experience

what we find is, that every individual has some elementary consciousness of a world in which all the objects he knows are brought into relation with each other, and some elementary consciousness of a society in which he regards himself as a member. But it is only through a long process of evolution that, out of such beginnings, there could arise the idea of the world as an ordered system, and the idea of a universal law which binds all rational creatures into one society. And when in the Stoic philosophy these ideas did arise, they at first took an abstract and therefore an imperfect form—a form in which the general conviction of the rationality of the system of things failed to lead to any consciousness of the excellence of the special parts of it, and in which the universal good of man, as determined by reason, appeared to be the negation of every particular end. The Stoic gets so far as to see that there is a unity beyond the differences of the particulars; but he is not able to use the conception of this unity as a principle by means of which each particular may be put in its right place in the whole. And a very long process of evolution was needed ere men could conceive the idea of a rational and organic order of the universe or of human life, in which each particular element, though rejected as an end in itself, might be reinstated as a necessary element of the whole,

and all mankind, with justice done to their special characteristics, might be united in one *πολιτεία τοῦ κόσμου*. The idea of such a process of development, by which man gradually comes to the realisation of himself and of all that is involved in his rational nature, is entirely hidden from the Stoics. Recognising no distinction between what is actual and what is potential in man, they, as it were, stereotype the moral consciousness in the form that was given to it by their own philosophy; and they fail to see that that form is itself a stage in a long process reaching back to the beginning of human history and containing in it the germs of the still higher ethical spirit of the future.

Hence they state the rationality of man's nature in a way that seems paradoxical and inconsistent with facts; and they are unable to find a logical place in their theory for anything but absolute knowledge or absolute ignorance, absolute virtue or absolute vice. The value and importance of their moral idealism as an expression of one aspect of the truth, is easily seen, but, in putting it forward as the whole truth, they deprive it of all verisimilitude. We cannot do justice to the nature of man without recognising that he is essentially rational, rational even in his utmost aberrations and follies; but it becomes utterly impossible to maintain this truth in the face of the most ordinary experience

of life, unless we also recognise that he is a being who always *is more than he knows himself to be,* and whose consciousness of himself is not a fixed and definite conception, but an idea that lives and grows and is never completely at one with itself. When, therefore, we attempt to say what he is, we have to remember that we are expressing not what has already realised itself in him, but what is ever in process of being realised, and what cannot be realised except through a long conflict with nature and with himself. The abstract, unreal, and almost Utopian character of Stoicism lies in this, that it ignores the characteristics of man as a developing being, and treats his good and his evil as fixed entities between which he stands to make an arbitrary choice. And it remains an insoluble problem how, on such a view, there should be any possibility of his making a wrong choice at all.

In order, however, that we may appreciate thoroughly the moral attitude of the Stoics, it is necessary that we should look a little more closely into their psychology.

LECTURE EIGHTEENTH.

THE STOIC CONCEPTION OF THE CHIEF GOOD.

I HAVE already spoken of the way in which the Stoic psychology emphasises the unity of the soul, both in its intellectual and in its moral life, in opposition to the dualistic views of Plato and Aristotle. According to the Stoics the conscious self occupies the place in man's nature which the divine reason holds in the universe. It is represented as a central power which, from one point of view, may be distinguished from the senses, but which, when so distinguished, must be taken as absolutely dominating over them. In fact, the distinction is for the Stoics only a relative one, nor is there any real separation between the principle that dominates and the powers and tendencies that are controlled by it. They belong to the same self, and are described as emanations from the ruling power, or as only that power itself under a special modification. Nor, again, do the Stoics admit any separation between the reason and the will, except as

different aspects of the same faculty. The will is, as with Kant, simply the reason in its practical exercise. We may ideally distinguish the reason that seeks to discover the nature of the objective world from the reason that seeks to realise itself in that world; but, as the world can be nothing but the realisation of reason, there is no real separation between the two. The first truth of psychology for the Stoic is, therefore, this: that it is the same soul or self that thinks and wills, perceives and desires; and that, though for some purposes it may be convenient to distinguish these different powers, though indeed the difference of the organs of sense to a certain extent forces this distinction upon us, yet it must never be supposed that they are like different beings which are, so to speak, enclosed in one skin, and which act and react externally upon each other.

Now, in our ordinary descriptions of the inner life, we are too apt to assume or suggest such externality of its elements to each other, and to forget the unity of the soul in the diversity of its manifestations. We are apt to think of the mind as a kind of arena in which intellect and will, sense and passion, and all the other faculties which we personify, play out their game, now conflicting and now co-operating with each other, without interference from any power that lies beyond their divided life. And in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, as we have seen, there is

something that favours this misconception. The opposition of form and matter introduces itself into the conception of the relations of reason and passion, and the intuitive intelligence seems in its pure nature to be regarded as independent of that connexion with the other elements of man's being, into which it is brought in our experience. This division especially troubles the psychology of the will, and its supreme act of choice is described by Aristotle as a combination of the two elements of desire and deliberation, without any clear indication of a principle of unity beyond their difference.[1] But the Stoic at once sets aside all such dualistic ways of describing the life of the soul. To him the dominating self is at once reason and will. And though, as we shall see, he lays great stress upon the division and conflict of the moral life, yet he will not for a moment allow that desire and passion are other than forms of the life of the one self, or expressions of its self-determined activity. This point is apt to be misconceived, because we frequently find Stoics speaking of the passions as unnatural or irrational. Such language might seem to involve a similar point of view to that of Plato, when he distinguishes the rational and the irrational elements in our being, or to that of Aristotle when he says that the desires are partly irrational, though so far participating in reason as to be capable

[1] Vol. I, p. 316 *seq.*

of submitting to its law. Now the Stoics allow, as of course everyone must allow, that man does not always act in accordance with the dictates of reason, which yet they regard as constituting his nature. Nay, they conceive that the passions are irrational in an even deeper sense than is admitted by Plato and Aristotle, as being not only indifferent to reason, but directly opposed to it. But they do not conceive of this as due to the existence in men of any separate element which is indifferent or recalcitrant to reason. No Stoic who was faithful to the fundamental ideas of his philosophy could admit that any feeling or desire is irrational in the sense of being independent of reason, or as, even in its utmost perversion, capable of exhibiting the characteristics which would exist in a creature altogether devoid of reason. The passions, irrational as they are in one sense, as perversions of our rational nature, are yet quite rational as being the determinations of a rational self and the manifestations of its characteristic power of judging and choosing. The folly, or, as the Stoics often designated it, the madness of man, in which he rebels against the rational principle of his being, is still in another sense quite rational. It is not the corruption or perversion of his nature by a foreign principle, but the division of that nature against itself. Hence we can never explain away intellectual error or moral guilt by attributing it to the influence of an irrational part of our being upon

that which is rational. We must explain it as a failure of man to be faithful to his true self, as a revolt of the rational being, as such, against reason. If man be said to be misled by sense, this only means that he has not properly tested the images through which he apprehends the objects without him; if he be said to be carried away by passion, this only means that he has failed to make clear to himself the conception of the supreme good which is bound up with his rational nature.[1]

Now I think that from one point of view this doctrine marks a distinct advance upon the psychology of Plato and Aristotle. It is true, as I have already indicated, that it leaves out of account the process of development by which the implicit unity of man's nature becomes explicit; in other words, it forgets that, though reason makes man what he is, he is ever becoming, and has never become completely rational and self-conscious. But it forces us to realise that the germinal reason is in him from the first, that it is the distinctive principle which constitutes his selfhood, and that, if there were not, even in his most undeveloped stage such an expression of the unity of the self, there would be in him no self, and, strictly speaking, no humanity at all. Even in the consciousness of an animal there is such a universal unity, that it would be absurd to treat

[1] See Bonhöffer, p. 93.

its different appetites as isolated or standing in merely external relations to each other. The animal at least feels *itself* in all it feels, and this gives an individual unity to its life through all its changes. Yet as this unity in the animal is not self-conscious, the animal might still be said to live wholly in the present, and to pass from one impression or impulse to another, not relating or connecting them, but identifying itself wholly with each in turn.

But a self-conscious being cannot live thus, just because it is self-conscious, or, in other words, because it refers all its action and passion to one *ego*. To forget, in considering him, this essential reference, is to leave out the unity which gives its distinctive character to his life, and then to treat the whole as if it were the sum of the parts, or the result of their action and reaction upon each other. On the other hand, if we do take account of this unity at all, we must realise its presence in all forms and changes of the soul's life. Perhaps we may put the truth more exactly by saying that the life that is self-conscious has in it both a new kind of unity and a new kind of division; for in such a life the self is necessarily set against the not-self—at once distinguished from it and essentially related to it—and this division, as well as this unity, is carried out in all its conscious states. But this means that in it sensation becomes perception, and appetite desire.

Hence, if in one sense we may be said to start with the feelings and impulses of animals, yet the very dawn of our rational life carries us beyond them, so that we never are simply sensitive or simply appetitive. In other words, our sensations and appetites are never what they are in the animal; they may be better or worse, higher or lower, but they are never the same thing. Our sensations may often be less keen in themselves than those of some animals; but they are subject from the earliest dawn of consciousness to a new interpretation, being referred to objects which are conceived as standing in definite relations to each other in the one world of experience which exists for one self. And they have become capable, because of the new meaning which is thus put into them, on the one hand, of conveying to us general truths which are beyond the reach of animal capacity, and, on the other hand, of deceiving and misleading us in a way and to a degree in which the comparatively simple nature of the animal can never be deceived or misled.

It is difficult, indeed, to describe the intelligible world as it exists for the inchoate self-consciousness without seeming to attribute too much to it; for in describing it we necessarily analyse it as it cannot analyse itself. Still, even allowing for the way in which, in the slow process of evolution, a change of kind hides itself under the appearance of

a mere change of degree, we can see that the dawn of self-consciousness brings with it the transformation of a sensitive continuity of life into the apprehension of a diversity of objects, which, as they are related to one self, form one world of experience. And in this we have already all the elements of a rational consciousness, a consciousness which is guided by general principles, however little the subject of it may as yet be capable of reflecting on such principles. Such a being can scarcely be said to have sensations at all, in the sense in which a being not self-conscious could have them. It is not that something has been externally added to the sensitive consciousness, but that development has brought with it a new differentiation and a new integration which have essentially transformed its whole nature.

And the same is true of the appetites of the animal. We have them in us, yet in another sense we have them not. For in us, as I have said, they become better or worse than animal impulses, just because they are referred to definite objects and ends, and because these objects and ends are not isolated from each other, but form elements in the life of one self, and so constitute parts of the good or happiness which it necessarily seeks. The self-conscious being, as I have said in a previous lecture, cannot seek merely to satisfy its desires; it must seek to satisfy itself, that is, it must seek

the particular end or object as part of a general good. And, though it is possible that for the moment these two things may seem to be identical, and the soul may throw itself with all the energy of passion into one pursuit, such a concentration must in the long run lead to a recoil. For it is impossible that a rational being should permanently identify the good with one element in it, or that he should live wholly, like the animal, in each impulse as it arises. There may be an approximation to this in a low stage of humanity; but, even then, there is a restlessness and dissatisfaction which indicates that the universal good, the end which a self-conscious being as such must seek, is separating itself from the particular objects in which it has been sought. A self-conscious being, as such, necessarily has the consciousness of itself in relation to a world, and its complete satisfaction cannot be less than to have its world for itself. This limitless self-seeking is the background of all the desires of a self, and it infuses into them all an element which may either exalt or degrade them, but which in any case cannot let them be like the simple and direct impulses which come with a definite physical need and pass away immediately with its satisfaction. The appetites of man, if we may call them so, are capable of being overstrained and perverted in a way that is not possible in the animal life, just because in them he seeks the satisfaction of a

self, and tries, as it were, to expand a finite into an infinite good. And, on the other hand, they are capable of being purified and idealised by being made the natural basis of a higher spiritual satisfaction, elements in that comprehensive good which alone can be regarded as adequate to the self.

It was, therefore, a very imperfect psychology which led Hume, as it has led many, to speak of the passions as if they had an independent nature of their own, which reason could not alter. On the contrary, we have to realise that, from the beginning, reason enters into the constitution of the desires, giving even to the simplest of our appetites a character which they could not have except in a rational being, and continuously transforming them by the idea of the good as the realisation and satisfaction of the self. For, as Plato declares, man necessarily seeks the good, "having an anticipative consciousness of its nature," which gradually becomes clearer and more comprehensive with every step in the widening of his experience and the development of his powers. Hence, whatever may be the explanation of that division in man's life which we ordinarily speak of as the conflict of reason and passion, we must recognise that it is a conflict within our rational nature, between different expressions of reason, and not between reason and something else. In insisting upon this point, therefore, the Stoics hit

upon a truth which was obscured or neglected in the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies. For it is the essential problem of human life that we can thus be divided against ourselves, in spite of the identity of the self of which we are conscious. The division and conflict of the soul, indeed, would not be so deep and deadly, if it could be explained by the opposition of matter to form, of sensuous passion to an ideal principle, and if it were not that the ideal principle in us is turned against itself. That the passions of men mislead them is the superficial aspect of the fact, but the deeper aspect of it is that we mislead ourselves; for the passion that misleads us is a manifestation of the same *ego*, the same self-conscious reason which is misled by it: and thus, as Burns puts it, it is the very "light from heaven" that leads us astray.

The great question, therefore, is how such self-contradiction is possible, or, in other words, how a being whose nature is reason, can act irrationally. This question is one to which the Stoics directed much attention; and their answer to it is well worth consideration, though it is made incomplete and unsatisfactory by the fact that, like Socrates, they are unable to think of reason except as conscious and reflective, so that for them unconscious reason is no reason at all. Hence they always treat conduct as the result of definite acts of judgment and reasoning. Their view may be summarised thus.

We always seek the good, but frequently we mistake something else for it, and, when this happens, we commonly say that our passions mislead us. But such passions are really the result of false judgments, in which we subsume under the idea of good actions or objects that are not good. And this again implies one of two things; either we make a mistake as to the idea of good itself, or we make a mistake as to the nature of the things which we subsume under it. In other words, either we do not clearly realise what we mean when we call a thing good, or we do not clearly perceive what the particular thing in question is, and, therefore, we suppose it to have a character which it has not.

But both kinds of knowledge are, in the opinion of the Stoics, within our reach. The idea of good is within our reach, for it is bound up with our rational nature; and if we do not attain to a definite understanding of it, it is because we do not undergo the labour of reflexion which is necessary to make it clear and distinct. And the knowledge of particular things, at least so far as is necessary to determine their value, is also within our reach, if we rightly use and carefully interpret the images which we receive from sense. To use an Aristotelian mode of expression, the rightness of our conduct depends upon the way in which we develop the practical syllogism, whose major premise is the definition of

the good, and whose minor premise brings under that definition the distinct image of the object we have to choose or reject. And both premises may be made definite and certain by anyone who rightly uses the faculties he has and the opportunities which experience brings him. We have, therefore, to examine the way in which the Stoics carry out this view in both cases, as regards the idea of good and as regards the objects brought under it.

The idea of good, according to the Stoics, is derived from within, from certain presuppositions or presumptions which are bound up with our rational nature, and which experience only calls into activity. They are called by the Stoics *ἔμφυτοι προλήψεις*, *ἔννοιαι φυσικαὶ τοῦ καθόλου*, and they are entirely confined—this at least seems to be the general view of the Stoics—to the sphere of morals and religion. There is some controversy, indeed, as to the force of these expressions; and some accounts would suggest that these so-called 'innate ideas' are regarded as the results of the natural and inevitable action of the mind upon the data supplied by sense, while other accounts make them to be pure *a priori* principles directly involved in the nature of reason and independent of experience. It is this last view which seems to be supported by the most authentic expressions of Stoic doctrine.[1] At the same time we

[1] Bonhöffer, p 188 *seq.*

are not to think of them as innate ideas in the sense which Locke attached to the name, that is, as fully developed conceptions which the mind has before it from the first, and which from the first it is clearly conscious of possessing. On the contrary, the Stoics frequently speak of the mind as only gradually coming to the knowledge of its own contents, and they even try to define the exact age at which it attains to a realisation of its innate ideas. They are innate, therefore, only in the sense that they are bound up with self-consciousness, so that no man can have reason developed in him without the apprehension of them. All men who are sane and who have come to maturity in the development of their faculties, have an idea of good and evil: an idea of good as that which is useful to the self and helps it to self-realisation, and of evil as that which prevents or obstructs such self-realisation. And the ultimate spring of all our activity is just the effort to attain the former and avoid the latter. In fact, every creature, as we have already seen, has in it the *conatus in suo esse perseverandi*, the effort to maintain and realise itself, as the fundamental impulse of its being. And man only differs from the rest in so far as he is self-conscious, and therefore conscious of the good he seeks as distinct from the particular objects in which he seeks it. And this he shows even in his use of such words

as good and evil, right and wrong, in his judgments as to particular objects and acts.

At the same time, the mere use of such terms, as Socrates showed, is far from implying a clear consciousness of what they mean, and is therefore consistent with the most erroneous use of them in our practical judgments. Hence the Stoic insists, almost as earnestly as Socrates or Plato, on the shallowness of mere opinion, and on the necessity of defining our general terms, and so rising to a clear consciousness of ourselves. Thus Epictetus speaks of a rhetorician, who attacked Plato because he sought to define such terms as goodness and justice, the meaning of which everybody knows.[1] Epictetus answers that Plato cannot be supposed to deny that we have by nature ideas or preconceptions of such virtues, but only that it is impossible to make an accurate use of them till we have analysed and defined them. How, for instance, can we know whether anything, say, pleasure or wealth, is really a good, if we have not realised exactly what we mean by good? We know generally that the good is that which alone is useful to us, and we go on at once to apply the term to any object that produces a pleasing impression. But the one thing necessary, before any such vaguely apprehended idea can help us, is a reflective analysis which shall sift out

[1] Epict. *Dissert.*, II, 17.

all other ideas that have got confused with the idea of good, and shall clearly distinguish all the elements contained in it. In like manner Cicero,[1] speaking for the Stoics, frequently insists upon the idea that it is the business of philosophy to disentangle and explicate the obscure and complex notions of virtue that nature has given us. It is only such a process which can enable us to rise above popular opinion, and can deliver us from the vague associations of the common consciousness, which attaches the predicate 'good' to many things that are evil or indifferent, just because it has never asked itself what it means by that predicate.

If, however, we ask how the Stoics carried out this process of analysing our innate notions of good, we find that the result is rather negative than positive. In other words, the process of analysis is for them mainly a process of elimination, in which the universal good of reason is emptied of all particular content. As rational beings, they tell us, we transcend in consciousness our own particular existence, as well as the particular existence of all the objects we know. We are, in Plato's language, "spectators of all time and existence," and therefore not limited in our knowledge to any particular object or class of objects. And, in like manner, in our practical life we are not confined to any special end; for the

[1] Cic. *De Officiis*, III, 81: cf. Bonhöffer, p. 208 *seq.*

good is the realisation of the self and not of any special tendency or desire. The good has thus to be distinguished from all particular objects of desire. So far we may admit the force of the Stoic reasoning. But if this be all that we can say, shall we not end by opposing the general idea of good to every particular form which that good can take? To this the Stoic's answer is, that there is a motive or end derived from our nature as rational beings: for it is the characteristic of reason to look at all things from a general point of view, from the point of view of the whole; and this originates in us a love of law or order for its own sake. Further, as this motive springs from our inmost self, so it may become supreme over all other motives and even take the place of them all. Nay, they contend, it must do so, in every one who is fully conscious of himself.

This conception is well illustrated by the Stoic account of the development of man's moral consciousness, which is reproduced by Cicero in the treatise *De Finibus.*[1] According to the view there stated, the primitive consciousness of man is a consciousness of himself, and his primitive motive is to realise himself. But what self? Cicero's Stoic answers that man begins with the consciousness of his particular self, and his desire is therefore for objects

[1] *De Finibus*, III, 5 *seq.*

that are useful towards its preservation and well-being. These objects are therefore called the first aims of nature (*τὰ πρῶτα κατὰ φύσιν, prima naturae*). They are objects such as health, wealth, honour, and the like, which are primarily sought for themselves, and not for the pleasure which is the result of their attainment. For we do not seek them because they give us pleasure, but they give us pleasure because we seek them; and it is a great error of the Epicureans to suppose that pleasure is the primary object of desire. Still at this stage we seek only such particular ends, vaguely recognising them as good. But reason as it awakes within us, carries us beyond the particular to the universal, and makes us think of life as a whole. We become conscious that as rational beings we carry within us a principle of order and unity, or, as it may otherwise be expressed, a principle of *ὁμολογία* or self-consistency, and that it is just this principle which makes us selves. As, therefore, we become conscious of what we are, we recognise that we can realise ourselves only as we maintain order and self-consistency in our lives. The *conatus in suo esse perseverandi*, which at first took the form of desires for particular objects or for the furtherance of the individual life, now takes the form of an exclusive impulse to realise the law of reason, and all the special ends of desire are regarded as indifferent.

Only he who thus acts with a single eye to the general end can be regarded as performing a moral action in the highest sense of the word, or, as the Stoics call it, a *κατόρθωμα*. In Kantian phrase, duty must be done for duty's sake alone, and not for the sake of the particular ends to be attained by it; and if any other consideration enters into our action, it drags it down to a lower, and so to speak, a non-moral level, even if it does not make it positively immoral.

Now there may be elements in the view set before us by Cicero which did not belong to the original form of Stoicism. But the conception of morality as resting upon the idea of *ὁμολογία*, or self-consistency, seems to be derived from the founder of the school. Stobaeus[1] tells us that Zeno declared the end to be simply to live consistently (*τὸ ὁμολογουμένως ζῆν*), *i.e.* to live according to a law of reason which agrees with itself in all its applications (*καθ' ἕνα λόγον καὶ σύμφωνον*). But the Stoics who followed him introduced a further qualification of this idea, and declared the end to be living in consistency with nature. Cleanthes, who succeeded Zeno as head of the school, was the first who made this addition; and we are told that he specially referred to the nature of the universe as that with which the virtuous man must be in harmony; while

[1] *Ecl.*, II, 134.

Chrysippus, who was *his* successor, though not rejecting the conception of Cleanthes, yet dwelt more upon the harmony of man with his own nature.

Now, if we take the account of Stobaeus as authentic, the first statement of the Stoic principle of morals coincides in a remarkable way with the ideas of Kant. Zeno said: "Act consistently on one principle": Kant said, "Act so that you can will that the maxim of your action should become a universal law." Both views go upon the idea that the reason which makes us men is an impartial faculty, a faculty in us that abstracts from our own individual case, and, indeed, from every individual case; and both views imply that we cannot act consistently on one law or principle and yet act wrongly. Immoral action is simply a case of using double weights and measures, and it is impossible to do evil consistently. Just as error and untruth are always partial, and a lie must break down somewhere by its own self-contradiction, if worked out logically to all its consequences; so an evil act is always an act which implies the very principle which it denies, and we cannot turn it into a universal law without bringing it into conflict with itself.

And this shows how easy was the transition by which the idea of self-consistency was translated by Zeno's followers into the idea of consistency with nature. Kant also translated his principle into the

form: "Act as if by your action the maxim of it were to be turned into a law of nature." It is easily shown, and has often been shown by critics of Kant, that nothing can be made of the idea of formal self-consistency. Any idea, if we keep it in its abstraction, may seem to be consistent with itself: it is only when we work it out in the concrete, and bring it into relation with other elements of experience, that it can be shown to be inconsistent. Or, to put it more exactly, an idea can be shown to be inconsistent only so far as it is shown to imply other ideas and yet to be at variance with them. To universalise the maxim of an act, therefore, must mean, if it means anything, to conceive it as an element in the system of things, which can be realised consistently with the realisation of all the other elements that make up that system. Thus the idea of self-consistency, the moment we try to give it a definite meaning, turns into the idea of consistency with the whole system of the universe: and this in the Stoic idea is the same thing as consistency with our own nature; for the nature of man corresponds to the nature of the universe as the microcosm to the macrocosm. Indeed, we have to remember that the demand for consistency comes *ex hypothesi* from our own nature which, as rational, is compelled to think and act on universal principles. "The end," says Diogenes Laertius,

speaking of the Stoic doctrine, "is to act in conformity with nature, that is, at once with the nature which is in us, and with the nature of the universe, doing nothing which is forbidden by that common law which is the right reason that pervades all things, and which is, indeed, one with the Divine Being who administers the universal system of things. Thus the life according to nature is that virtuous and blessed flow of existence, which is enjoyed only by one who always acts so as to maintain the harmony between the God within and the will of the power that orders the universe." [1]

There is, however, in all this a certain ambiguity, which we meet with also in the philosophy of Kant, and which neither the Stoics nor Kant ever cleared up. All the different formulae in which the moral idea is expressed—self-consistency, consistency with nature, consistency with the nature of man—are abstract phrases. If they carry us away from the particular to the universal, from the part to the whole, from the ideas of special objects and ends to the general principle which realises itself in the whole system of things within and without us, yet they do not tell us anything definite about that principle except that it is not realised in any particular object or end. It is realised, according to the Stoics, in the system of the whole, and it is realised in the individual man, so far

[1] Diog. Laert, VII., 1, 53.

as he can repeat that system in himself: and they are ready to maintain that that system is organic, that all nature is but the environment of a world-community of spirits, and that we are all members one of another in so far as we are organs of it. But when we ask what is behind these brave words, their meaning seems to melt away from us, and that, whether we look to the universe or to the individual soul. As regards the latter, acting by reason seems to be opposed to acting by any particular passion, by any passion that points to a special end or attaches us to an individual person; but if, in order that reason may rule, all such impulses have to be driven out, reason will rule in an empty house. Hence it is not easy to answer the charge brought against the Stoics that, after all, they were merely ascetics; in other words, that their morality not only begins with the mortification of the passions, but ends there. They may not, and do not, intend this result; for they are possessed with the idea of a systematic ordering of the whole nature of man, which is to be attained by this negation of the passions; but in excluding under that name all particular desires and affections as such, they have deprived themselves of all the elements out of which such a system of life might be constructed, and put the bare idea of system in place of its actuality. It might, indeed, be answered that they only break the links that bind man to particular beings and things without him in

order to bind him closer to the whole of which he and they are parts; that they withdraw him from the special affections of kindred and race, only in order to unite him as man to all mankind. But this, again, raises the question as to the possibility of realising such a union, a union of men that takes no account of time or circumstance, or of individual or national character. What is meant by a φιλανθρωπία that is not fertile in special affections to individual human beings, affections which adapt themselves to their special character and the special relations into which they are brought? And what is meant by an organic unity of mankind in a πολιτεία τοῦ κόσμου, if the reason that is to bind them together be taken merely as a common element in the nature of each, which connects them in spite of their differences in other respects? A real community cannot be constituted except between those whose common nature shows itself just in their differences, and makes these very differences the means of binding them together, by fitting each for a special office in the common life. But the logic of the Stoics will not carry them to this farther step. Hence the idea of the organic unity of mankind remains abstract, or turns into a mere ideal which never can be realised. For, as a mere ideal, it remains something purely subjective, something which exists only in the soul of the individual, and cannot be found

or produced in the world without. As subjective, however, it loses all its content, or finds its content merely in the negation of the particular passions. Thus the wise man of the Stoics becomes a mere bundle of negations; for when we have said that he is free from all particular influences, whether from within or from without, we have left nothing but the formal self-consistency of a will of which nothing can be said, except that it is ever at one with itself.

If, again, we look to the Stoic theory of the nature of the universe we arrive at a similar result. The Stoic is prepared to say that all things are the manifestation of reason, and that even by their defects, as particular things, they must contribute to the realisation of reason; but he is not able to take a single step towards the recognition of any particular thing as so contributing. Still less is he prepared to show how any special interest of human life may become an embodiment of the good, or how any endeavour of man will help to realise it.

Now it may be admitted that it is just here that we find the crucial difficulty of any idealistic view of the world such as the Stoics profess—a difficulty which Mr. Bradley puts vividly and epigrammatically when he says that "The world is the best of all possible worlds, and everything in it is a necessary evil." In other words, it is hard to combine a consciousness of the evil or imperfection of each part of the world with

a perception of its value as an element in a perfect whole. Yet it is obvious that just this is the task which must be undertaken by any philosophical system that bases itself, as Stoicism based itself, upon the idea that the world is a rational or intelligible system. Otherwise, the doctrine that 'the real is the rational' will remain a bare presupposition, an assertion in regard to the whole which is not in any way proved in relation to the parts. Now this seems just the position reached by the Stoics; nor would it be unfair to say that Mr. Bradley's epigram, taken literally, represents their view of the universe. For if Stoicism be an optimism in one aspect of it, it is a pessimism in another. It is pessimistic and hopeless, when it looks at the particular things in the world, at the particular phases of its history, at the particular interests of human life: but when it turns to the universe and its law, it is optimistic even to the extent of an absolute disbelief in the reality of evil. And it leaves these two aspects of things in unrelieved antagonism, sometimes even putting them side by side in startling paradox. This is true of all the Stoics; but it is specially characteristic of the noble, but sad-hearted Marcus Aurelius, who is constantly declaring to us his faith in the perfection of a universe, in which nevertheless he can hardly find anything but disappointment.

He has no doubt of the existence of the world-community of spirits, yet he is continually exhorting himself to expect nothing but misunderstanding and malevolence in those with whom he has to do. He presents to us the pathetic figure of a great Roman Emperor, struggling to maintain the order of the imperial system against the disintegrating forces that are attacking it from without and from within, and supporting himself by a conviction of the eternal reality of an ideal which everything outward seems to contradict, and which he can find nowhere realised except in his own soul. The Stoic could not get beyond this noble hopelessness: he could not see how by losing his life he might save it, or how the idea of the rationality of the world-system could blossom into a personal hope for himself or for any of his fellows, in whom reason for the time had found its embodiment. He was essentially a soldier left to hold a fort surrounded by overpowering hosts of the enemy. He could not conquer or drive them away, but he could hold out to the last and die at his post.

LECTURE NINETEENTH.

THE STOIC VIEW OF PRACTICAL ETHICS.

In the last lecture I said that the Stoic treats conduct as the result of a practical syllogism, in which a particular act or object is subsumed under the idea of the good. But in order that such a practical syllogism may be possible, we must be able to obtain a clear definition of the good in general, and we must also be able to understand the particular case to which it is to be applied. The former is possible, because the idea of good is bound up with our self-consciousness, and only needs to be brought to light by reflexion and analysis. And I attempted in the last lecture to show how this task was performed by the Stoic and criticised the result to which he was led. In doing so, I partly anticipated the *second* question as to the minor premise in the practical syllogism—the question how, on Stoic principles, we are able to determine the nature of the particular things which have to be subsumed

under the idea of the good. But we cannot do full justice to their theories until we have directly examined their answer to this question, and especially their thoughts as to the absolute or relative indifference of all outward things.

First of all, then, let us ask how, according to the Stoics, we get knowledge of particular things. To this the answer is that our knowledge of such things is not, like our knowledge of the good, innate, but must be derived from sense. This, however, does not mean that the truth of such objects is immediately given to us through sensation. It is true that the metaphor of 'impression' is taken literally by the Stoics, and that the outward object is conceived as stamping its image on the soul as a seal impresses itself on wax. At the same time this idea of the passivity of the soul in receiving impressions is partly corrected by the thought that the mind, in receiving the impression, is in tension against the object that impresses it, and grasps that object with more or less energy in the moment of perception. Now, knowledge depends just upon the firmness of this grasp. We are not to take all impressions as equally true or equally representative of reality. The impressions which we receive when the mind is feeble in its action and takes things just as they come, are vague and uncertain. But we are able, by directing the attention steadily and persistently to

the object, to get images whose outlines are clearly defined, and which bear with them the evidence of their objectivity in the vividness and distinctness with which they present themselves. In Cicero's language, such images carry with them a peculiar and convincing testimony to the things they represent (*propriam quandam habent declarationem earum quae videntur*).[1] Such a well-attested image is called a φαντασία καταληπτική, a phrase which has been interpreted in various ways. Zeller and others have taken it as meaning an image which can lay hold of the mind or is borne in upon it; but more probably it means a presentation or idea which grasps, or enables the mind to grasp the object as it really is.[2] The sanity or strength of the mind, according to this view, is shown in its refusal to commit itself or give its assent to any belief as to the object, until it has got a clearly defined and persistent image of it. Till we have compassed such an image, we ought to withhold our judgment; but when we have attained it, we have a right to take it as representing reality. The φαντάσία καταληπτική is therefore declared to be the criterion of truth; in other words, it is declared to bear with it its own evidence, and to be in its turn a touchstone for other ideas which are less distinct.

[1] Cic., *Acad.*, 1, 41.
[2] Zeller, III, 1, p. 72 (2nd ed.): Bonhöffer, p. 160.

It is easy to see that we have here a very naïve and elementary consciousness of the difficulties which stand in the way of scientific knowledge. Accordingly the Stoics were greatly harassed by the objections of the Academics, who pointed out, on the one hand, that it is impossible for images of sense to be so clear and complete as to make deception impossible; and, on the other hand, that very clear and complete images often impress themselves on our minds, which yet cannot be supposed to correspond to any objective reality. Further, they pointed out that there is a great risk of misinterpretation entering into the process whereby we form a definite image of any object out of the data of sense—a risk which the simple theory of the Stoics hardly recognises at all.

And there is a more vital objection behind. For the Stoic explanation of the act of perception presupposes a materialistic conception of the relation of the mind to its object, and involves that they are external to each other in the same way that one piece of matter is external to another. But if this were a true view of the relation, the mind could directly know only itself; and it could know other objects, if at all, only indirectly and by inference. What is present to the mind must, *ex hypothesi*, be only its own states and the impressions it has received; but how then can it get assurance that any such state or impression represents the object correctly, or indeed

that it represents any external object at all? If we begin by presupposing a division of subject and object —and on the materialistic theory of the Stoics we must so begin—the mind can be conscious in the first instance only of itself and its own ideas; and it is impossible that it should go beyond itself, so as to assert absolutely the reality of anything else. Thus materialism cuts away the ground from under itself by the externality of the relation which it establishes between the mind and its object. Obviously also, if we put the problem in this way, if we ask how we can know that the states or impressions of the mind correspond to a reality which is outside of the mind, we can solve it only by an assumption; for there is no *tertium quid* beyond the subject and the object, which can decide whether the one corresponds to the other, and the only tests which can be applied to distinguish true from false images—such as, for instance, their distinctness, their permanence, or their self-consistency—are themselves subjective, and cannot authorise us to bridge the supposed gulf between subject and object. Obviously, on this basis, the game is in the hands of the Sceptic, who maintains that we cannot know anything whatsoever about objective reality. This difficulty can be escaped only by giving up the presupposition with which the Stoic starts, that the relation between the mind and the object involves

the physical externality of the one to the other. We then see that the real question is how the division of subject and object actually arises in our experience. For it must arise in our experience, if it is to exist for us at all; and, so arising, it cannot be an absolute division, or a division in which the object is spatially external to the subject. It cannot be a distinction between our experience and something else which, *ex hypothesi*, cannot come into that experience.

These objections to the Stoic theory of knowledge are, however, of less consequence than they might seem, because the Stoic does not attach importance to knowledge for its own sake, but only with a view to practice. What he desires to understand, therefore, is not the specific character of objects, but only their value, or want of value, in relation to the moral end. In his eyes the great danger lies in taking external objects for more than they are, and so exalting them into the place of the real good of life. If, on the other hand, we clearly realise the limited and imperfect nature of such objects, we shall be able to see what they can, and what they cannot, give us. Dispel the magnifying mist that hangs about the things of sense and time, making them seem more desirable or more dangerous than they really are, and we shall cease to love or to fear them. Marcus Aurelius is continually dwelling upon this lesson: "Always define and clearly picture to yourself the

object presented to you, so that you may see exactly what kind of thing it is, discriminating it in its totality from all other things and in your own mind assigning to it, and to all the elements of which it is compounded and into which it will be ultimately resolved, the name that properly belongs to each. For nothing is so productive of magnanimity as the power of systematically and truthfully testing every object that comes before us, and so looking into it as to discern the nature of the universe to which it belongs, the special use it subserves, its value in relation to the whole system of things, and, in particular, to man as a citizen of the supreme city, of which all other cities may be regarded as the households."[1]

Now, with the Stoic, this careful looking into the value of outward things ends always in the discovery that they have little or no value. "When we have meat or eatables of any kind before us, let us grasp the images of them firmly, and say to ourselves: This is the carcase of a fish, and this of a fowl or a pig; and again: This Falernian wine is only a little grape-juice, and this purple robe is nothing more than sheep's wool dyed with the blood of a shell-fish; for, when we thus represent things to ourselves, we penetrate to their inmost nature and search through all their relations so as to realise

[1] *Comment.*, III, 11.

exactly what they are. So ought we to deal with our whole life, and whenever imagination presents things to us as specially worthy of admiration, we should strip them bare and discover their cheapness, setting aside all the fine names by which they are exalted to the skies."[1] Again: "Decay is in the material substance of all things; they are but water, dust, bones, and stench. What is marble but knobs of earth; gold and silver but sediment; raiment but tags of hair; purple but the blood of the shellfish? Even the breath of life is no better, ever changing from one to another."[2] "Little value wilt thou set upon the delights of music, if thou wilt but decompose the melodious sound into its component notes, and ask thyself as to each of them: Is it *this* that overpowers thee? Thou wilt be ashamed to confess it. The same result will follow the analysis of dancing or athletic exercises into the movements and postures which constitute them. In short, setting aside virtue and virtuous acts, thou hast but to carry out this method of dissection of things into their elements, and the result will be contempt for them all."[3] Above all the 'bubble reputation' is to be reduced to its true value by reflexion on its exact meaning. "He who is greedy for fame perceives not that of those who remember him every one will soon be dead: and so in due course will it be with each of their successors till the last flicker of memory,

[1] *Comment.*, VI, 13. [2] *Id.*, IX, 36. [3] *Id.*, XI, 2.

through flutterings and failings, dies altogether out. Nay, suppose that those who will remember thee were immortal and their memory of thee also immortal, what is their good report to thee? To thee, dead, absolutely nothing. Well, but to thee, living, what value is praise, except indeed for some secondary result? Why then wilt thou be so foolish as to neglect nature's present gift, and cling to what one or another says hereafter?"[1]

The object of this close scrutiny is, of course, to reduce all finite and changing things to their proper finitude, that is, not to let them bulk too largely or assume to themselves any absolute value. Wealth, honour, health, sensual and aesthetic pleasure, domestic affections and bonds of friendship, and even life itself, every one of them is to be reduced to what it is in itself, and its limited scope is to be recognised. For thus alone can we be in a position to compare it with the good, and see what is its relation thereto. And the ultimate result at which the Stoic aims is to dis-illusionise us, and make us reject the idea that anything external is essential to the good of a rational being, or can have more than a relative value for him, if it has even that.

With this is connected another thought, which points in the same direction, namely, that things external are mainly gifts of fortune, and that no effort

[1] *Comment.*, IV, 19.

of the individual can make them secure. To place our happiness in them is, therefore, to fill our mind with disturbance and anxiety, which he alone can avoid who fixes his interest and desire upon the things he can control, that is, upon the thoughts of his own mind and the acts of his own will. This thought is specially emphasised by Epictetus, who puts it in the forefront of his *Manual of Ethics*, as the lesson which of all others is most important for the guidance of life. "Of things that exist, some are in our own power, some are not in our own power. In our own power are opinion, will, desire, aversion, in a word, whatever are our own acts; not in our own power are the body, property, reputation, political authority, in a word, whatever are not our own acts. And the things that are in our own power are naturally free, not subject to restraint or hindrance; while the things that are not in our own power are weak, slavish, subject to restraint, alien to ourselves. Remember, then, that if you think the things that are by nature slavish to be free, and the things alien to yourself to be your own, you will be obstructed in your efforts, you will ever be in sorrow and disturbance, ever blaming gods and men; but if you think that only to be your own which is really your own, and that which is alien to be alien, no one will ever be able to constrain or hinder you. You will blame no one, you will accuse no one, you will do nothing against your

own will; no one will be able to harm you, and you will have no one for your enemy. If, however, you do aim at such high objects, remember that you cannot hope to attain them with a divided will, but only if you dismiss all other aims, abandoning some of them once for all, and setting aside the rest of them at least for a time. For, if you attempt to attain both kinds of goods, both those higher ends and such objects as wealth and power, you may probably lose the latter because you seek also the former, and in seeking the latter, you will certainly lose the former, which are the most real sources of freedom and happiness. Practise yourself, therefore, in saying to every threatening appearance: 'You are but an appearance, and not the reality you pretend to be.' Then weigh well each appearance by the rules of reason, and, above all, consider whether it relates to things in your own power, or to things not in your own power; and if it relates to anything not in your own power, be ready to say: 'Then it is nothing to me.'"

In connexion with this we have to remember the religious point of view from which the Stoic starts in considering the events of life. The divine power which rules the universe, has, he believes, put into each one's hands everything that is necessary for his own welfare. Whatever, therefore, it is not in our power to secure, must be regarded as unnecessary or indifferent. The things that are really mine, or

important to me, are simply what I choose to think of and what I resolve to do—the inner movement of my mind, the inner determination of my will. In these alone lie good and evil for me. My will may be defeated in the effort to attain any objective end, and if I place my good or happiness in such ends, I am the slave of fortune. But no one can hinder me from thinking and willing what I please: no one can prevent me from determining myself in a right or a wrong way, however they may thwart the outward realisation of my will, or even fetter me so as to prevent any outward activity at all. But everything outside of the act of my will is to be regarded as indifferent, even the particular objects to which the will may be directed: for the essential good is simply the state of the will itself.

For the Stoics, therefore, as for Kant, the "one thing in the world or out of it that can be called unconditionally good is a good will," and that altogether irrespective of its effect. *In magnis voluisse sat est.* The good will is the one treasure that no one can take from us, the bad will is the only evil for which we are responsible or which we need to fear. And the will is always master of itself, if it is content with its own act and does not look to external results. Hence the Stoic commendation of apathy, which does not mean the absence of all feeling and desire, but the quenching of all such feeling and desire as is

produced by an undue estimate of external things. The whole intensity of emotion and impulse, the whole energy of our being, is to be concentrated upon the one thing needful, the inner state of the mind and will. For it is not external things that are dangerous to us, but our own false opinions about them. Now, in the Stoic's view, we have the power so to regulate our opinions and control our thoughts, that we shall see nothing but the truth; and if we use this power so as to realise the goodness of what is really good and the indifference of everything else, we can direct our whole love and desire to the former. If, therefore, we do not come between ourselves and the good, no one else can prevent our attaining it. "You can be invincible," says Epictetus, "if you refuse to enter into any conflict in which it is not in your power to conquer."[1]

We are apt to see something like folly and presumption in the Stoic pictures of the wise man, of his irresistible clearness of insight, and his impregnable strength of will: and, indeed, we cannot avoid doing so, if we suppose that the Stoics meant them as descriptions of themselves. Horace's jests on this subject are well known. But we might almost as reasonably take Kant's "I can because I ought" as an assertion of his own impeccability. The Stoics believed that the ideal was realisable, and even that it

[1] Epict., *Man.*, § 19: *Dissert.*, III, 6.

had been realised in one or more of the sages of the past, such as Socrates. But it would be impossible to find a Stoic claiming himself to be the wise man, and Epictetus and Seneca and Marcus Aurelius tell us plainly that they have not attained. We are to regard such descriptions rather as exhortations, addressed by the Stoic to himself as well as to others—efforts of strong men to raise themselves above the chances and changes of mortal life to a consciousness of the better part that could not be taken from them. "What should we have in readiness in such circumstances?" says Epictetus, speaking of the dangers to which good men were exposed under a tyranny like that of Nero, "What but this, to keep clear in our minds the distinction between what is our own and what is not our own, what is committed and what is not committed to us? Suppose that I have to die! Am I then obliged to die lamenting? Suppose that I am to be imprisoned! Need I weep over my chains? Suppose that I am to be banished! Can any man hinder me from going into exile with smiles and cheerfulness?"[1] Such language seems somewhat overstrained, and would become absurd, if we took it as a profession of absolute indifference to the greatest calamities; but if we take it as the voice of a man, calling upon his fellows in the hour of danger to bear themselves nobly, or rebuking his own

[1] Epict., *Dissert.*, I, 1.

fainting heart like a Homeric hero, and challenging himself to regard every outward evil and death itself as nothing in comparison with the loss of the integrity of his moral life, it takes quite a different aspect. We do not consider Luther ostentatious, when in his well-known hymn, he says:

> "And if they take our life,
> Goods, honour, children, wife,
> Yet is their profit small,
> These things shall perish all":

and the Stoic also, in his own sense, could say with Luther that even if they all perish, "The city of God remaineth."

But, it will be said—though the Stoic may be right in treating most outward goods as infinitely less important than the maintenance of truth and inner integrity—is it not absurd for him to say that they are indifferent, if that means that they are of no importance at all; and this especially when under outward things are included, not only wealth, honour, and life, but also the fortunes and life of family and friends and all who are dear to him? To this it is at least a partial answer to say, that the Stoic, when he asserts that outward things are indifferent, does not mean that they are indifferent in every point of view, but only that they are indifferent as compared with the inward goodness of the will; for that which has a price, however great, becomes

indifferent, when set against that which is priceless. The good will alone is an absolute good, and nothing can be measured in the same scales with it. You cannot weigh death against a bad action, or wealth and honour against a good one. In other words, you cannot by the summing up of finites reach an amount which you can set in the balance against the infinite; for, so measured, the greatest possible collection of finites is the same as nothing at all.

This thought throws light upon another doctrine of the Stoics, which is often misunderstood or treated as an inconsequence. It has often been said that their doctrine of the indifference of outward things was so absurd, that they were obliged in the long run to get out of the *impasse* by making a distinction to which they had no right, between various kinds of indifferent things. They are accused, in short, of hedging before the difficulties caused by their own uncompromising statements. Unfortunately for this view, the doctrine that there is distinction of value between indifferent things, is not a qualification subsequently introduced into the Stoic system, but belongs to the earliest form of it. And I think we can see, on consideration, that it is a necessary part of that system.

The doctrine is that, among things indifferent, there are some which are naturally to be preferred, and others which are naturally to be rejected, while there

are only a very few things that are absolutely and from every point of view indifferent. The things that are naturally to be preferred are those that make for welfare in the ordinary sense—health rather than sickness, wealth rather than poverty, honour rather than dishonour, the love of friends and kindred rather than loneliness and bereavement. All these things the Stoic grants to be naturally eligible from the point of view of our finite individuality: nay, he admits that, other things being equal, it is or may be, our duty to choose them. But, in regard of them all, he insists on three points: first, that they are finite and transitory; secondly, that they are not in our own power; and, lastly, that, because of both characters, they are capable of turning into the greatest evils, if we attach ourselves to them as if they were absolute goods.

In reference to the first point I have already shown how the Stoic is constantly arguing against the tendency to idealise finite things and treat them as if they were infinite. "Always remember," says Epictetus, "exactly to realise what each thing that attracts you is. If it is a piece of pottery you are fond of, say to yourself 'this is but a piece of pottery,' and you will not be greatly moved, when it is broken."[1] This mode of estimating things as they really are is to be practised in regard to all our

[1] *Man.*, § 3.

possessions, and we are constantly to recognise that even the highest of them, even the love of friends and kindred, is a finite and not an infinite good. We must love it, therefore, as finite and as transitory; for, as finite, it cannot fill the soul, and, as transitory, it cannot afford a support on which the soul may safely lean. And if we treat such things as absolute goods, the really absolute goods which alone are in our power—the unclouded vision of truth, the pure energy of righteous will—must escape us. The Stoic, therefore, while admitting that these things are in themselves eligible, counsels us to be continually realising to ourselves their limited value and our uncertain tenure of them; and sometimes, for discipline's sake, or as a counsel of perfection, he would have us turn from them altogether.

This is well expressed in two paragraphs of the *Manual* of Epictetus. In one of these[1] he says, "Remember that you ought in life to behave as if you were at a banquet. Suppose some dish is carried round and is placed before you; stretch out your hand and take a portion with decency. Suppose that it is carried past you; do not detain it. Suppose that it has not yet reached you; do not send your desire forward to it, but wait quietly till it comes. Do so with respect to children; do so with respect to a wife; do so with respect to the honours of office;

[1] *Man.*, § 15.

do so with respect to wealth: and so you shall one day be a worthy partner at the banquet of the gods. But if you take none of the things set before you, and even despise them, then you will be not only a fellow-banqueter with the gods, but a sharer of their dignity; for by so acting Diogenes and Heraclitus deserved to be called, and to be, divine." Or, take another passage,[1] where he says: "As on a voyage when the vessel has reached a port, and you go out of the ship to get water, it is an amusement by the way to pick up a shell or a flower. But your thoughts all the while ought to be directed to the ship, constantly watching for the call of the captain: and when he does call you, you must throw away all these things and hasten, that you may not have to be bound and thrown into the ship by others. So in life also if, instead of a flower or a shell, there be given to you a wife or a child, there is nothing to hinder you from taking them for your own. But if the captain should call, run to the ship and leave all such things behind you." "Especially," the old Epictetus adds with a touch of pathos, "if you are an old man, do not go very far from the ship, lest you should lose your passage."

Epictetus, indeed, regards the life of absolute renunciation as an ideal, much in the same way that the medieval Church regarded the life of a monk

[1] *Man.*, § 7.

or a nun; but he did not expect, any more than that Church did, or than the Roman Catholic Church does now, that every one should adopt such a life. He even earnestly warns off from it every one who has not a special vocation for such a life and who has not counted the cost. For all who have not this special vocation, he is content if, without renouncing relative goods, they should constantly remember that such goods are relative, and that the absolute good must never be sacrificed to them. Finally he bids them always remember that all outward things are in the hand of God, and therefore must be rightly disposed. In this respect the attitude of the Stoic is essentially religious; and what gives him strength to meet misfortune and bereavement, is not so much indifference as confidence in the divine power that gives and takes away.

But there is still another aspect in which the Stoic modifies his conception of the indifference of all outward things. He is obliged to recognise that action is particular, or that in each action we have to deal with a particular object. Our motive may be to realise the general idea of law or order, but in every special action we have to apply that idea to some specific end. Hence, though the inner attitude of the will be everything, yet it always is an attitude toward something external. This the Stoic is obliged to admit; and hence, while he

maintains that virtue is entirely concerned with the general idea of law, and that a good act in the full sense of the word (a *κατόρθωμα*) must be done entirely for the sake of the law, yet he has to allow that in each case there is a certain propriety (*καθῆκον*) to be observed, though the observance of this propriety could not of itself make the act moral. From this point of view, the Stoic is fond of speaking of particular objects, in the treatment of which the good will has to be realised, as the materials of morality; and he calls upon us to have faith that the right materials are always provided for us by divine providence. But what he most insists upon is that the important thing is not the materials, but the way in which we use them. Hence he regards all human lots, whether fortunate or unfortunate in the ordinary sense, as nothing more than opportunities for the exercise of those moral qualities which in his view constitute the highest, and indeed the only absolute values in life. "What," says Epictetus, "are outward things? They are materials for the will, in dealing with which it shall attain its own good or ill. But how is it to attain to such good? By not being dazzled by the materials it works with, or confusing them with the good itself. For our opinions on this subject, when right, will make the will right, and when wrong will make it wrong. This law hath God established and declared: 'If

thou wouldest have aught of good, receive it from thyself.'"[1] Or, again, take this passage from the *Manual*:[2] "Whatever happens to you, turn to yourself and ask what power you have to make use of it. If you see beauty, regard it as an opportunity to exercise self-restraint: if what comes to you be labour, you will find in it the material for your powers of endurance: if what comes be reproach, you will find in it the material for patience."

This quotation illustrates another point, namely, that, while the Stoics do not deny that good fortune is 'eligible,' they are disposed to dwell upon misfortune as the best opportunity or material for virtue, and to regard good fortune rather as a temptation. On the whole, however, the main lesson they press is that men should take what comes, and attach as little importance as possible to it, and as great importance as possible to the way in which it is used. Thus their last thought is expressed in the following aphorism, in which, as frequently, Epictetus compares the world to a stage. "Remember that you are an actor in a play, and that the character of the play is fixed by the author and the stage-manager. If he wills that you should play the part of a poor man, see that you do it to the life: if of a lame man, if of a magistrate, if of a private person, it is all one. For it is your business to

[1] Epict., *Dissert.*, I, 29. [2] *Man.*, § 10.

act well the character given you to represent, but to select what it shall be, belongs to another." [1]

We may bring out the strength and the weakness of this view by contrasting it with that which Aristotle expresses in the *Ethics*. Aristotle also insists that outward goods are merely the materials or instruments of the moral life, but that they do not constitute its real good, and may even be adverse to that good. Still, on the whole, he holds to the view that, in order to attain the moral ideal, we must be well provided with such instrumental goods. Happiness depends upon the exercise of the virtues, or, in more modern language, upon activities in which the highest powers of man as a rational being are developed and manifested. But, in Aristotle's view, it is only in the position of a citizen of a free state that these activities are possible, and such a position implies many advantages of fortune. Aristotle, indeed, is not without a perception that nobility of character may 'shine through' misfortune and suffering; but as a rule he regards them not as opportunities, but as obstructions which may even, in extreme cases, be fatal to all exercise of high moral or intellectual qualities, seeing that they take away from the moral artist the proper materials with which he has to work. Hence the idea of moral excellence in a

[1] *Man.*, § 17.

slave or artizan does not come within Aristotle's scope; and he would certainly not have understood what Bacon meant when he said that "prosperity was the blessing of the Old Testament, but adversity the blessing of the New."

Now the Stoics stand above Aristotle in one respect, namely, that as they break away from the limited ideal of the Greek State, and hold that the highest good of man is not dependent on the special environment of the citizen in such a State, or on the special forms of social life that were developed by it. But they go much farther than this when they maintain that all outward interests, even the interests of the social life in all its forms, are, from the highest point of view, indifferent, and that, indeed, from every point of view, such interests are to be regarded as unessential. For thus they are driven back upon the isolated inner life of the individual, and have to confine the absolute good to the bare state and direction of the will. Now the mistake of this negative attitude may easily escape notice, so long as it shows itself merely in treating wealth, or fame, or pleasure as indifferent; but when it leads the Stoics to deal in the same way with the ties of kindred and friendship, of family or nation, and to place virtue in obedience to an abstract law which is independent of all these, we begin to suspect some mistake or overstatement. And the mistake

seems to be that, in spite of their identification of the reason that constitutes the nature of man with the divine reason which manifests itself in the universe, they do not realise that the consciousness of self as a moral being, and the consciousness of other selves as members of one society, are two factors that cannot be separated. In other words, they fail to recognise that the inner and the outer life are not two spheres of activity, but only different aspects of the same thing; and that if we fall back on the former to the exclusion of the latter, we deprive it of all its meaning. The whole contents of my thought, the whole interest of my feelings, the whole material of my desires, have reference to things and beings other than myself. Man, as Aristotle says, is "a social and political animal"; and to treat him as having an inner life of his own, which is complete in itself, or only stands in accidental relations to the things and beings without him, is to empty life of all its interests, and then to claim for the bare self—the blank form of self-consciousness—all the rights to which it is entitled just because its interests are as wide and comprehensive as the universe itself.

And here, I think, we find at once the truth that underlies the Stoic theory, and the point where it is deficient. The greatness of a self-conscious being, that which makes him an end in himself in a sense

in which no other being is such an end, is his universal potentiality. His knowing faculty, as Aristotle saw, is not limited to any one kind of objects, but carries with it the idea of the universe as an all-embracing whole. Hence it cannot be entirely absorbed by any one impression or interest, or lose the power of bringing it into relation with other impressions and interests. Men may be limited and prejudiced, but, so long as sanity is maintained, their minds cannot be so occupied by any special objects or aspect of objects as to blind them to everything else, or absolutely to shut their eyes to the teachings of new experience. And the whole progress of culture and science is just the continual effort of man, prompted by his essential nature, to rise above partial views and impressions, and to see the world as a whole, without unduly emphasising any special aspect of it. In like manner, our moral life also is a continual effort after universality. For, in the first place, if we consider the manifold interests of the individual—all his activities of sense and intelligence, of appetite and desire—we cannot but recognise that each of them has only a relative value, and that that is an imperfect and lop-sided life, in which one of these interests is allowed to swallow up all the rest. Hence, if, at any special stage of our development one element seems all-important, yet, as life goes on, we are carried past it, or checked in our pursuit

of it, by the necessity of attending to other elements, or by the discovery that the satisfaction of the ruling passion still leaves us unsatisfied. Thus the lesson of experience is that the life which will satisfy the self must be complex and full: nay, that it must find a place for all interests in due proportion. Nor, again, can we avoid looking beyond the individual life to the wider whole of which it is a part. No one can entirely escape the necessity of seeing his own life from the point of view of the society to which he belongs; of recognising the claims of its other members upon himself, and feeling that he has done wrong, if he has treated these claims in a quite different way from his own. The individual has, of course, a bias in his own favour; but he recognises the wrongfulness of unsocial action in the case of others, even when he tries to excuse it in himself. It is this potential universality of interest which makes man capable of a social life that goes beyond the herding of animals, and which in the progress of history gradually widens and deepens the conception of his social duties and relations. All moral progress, indeed, is bound up with this widening of the claims of man upon each other and the deepening of their ideas as to the character of these claims, as claims for each individual, not only to life and its elementary blessings, but to all the share he is capable of taking

in the great heritage of humanity, in all the interests, lower and higher, of its manifold existence.

Now, in a sense, the Stoics did recognise the potential universality of man's life, and the acknowledgment of it was, indeed, the very centre of their philosophy. Their mistake lay in opposing this universality to the particular interests in and through which alone it can be realised. As to the former point, take the following passage from Marcus Aurelius.[1] "What are the capacities of the rational soul? It sees itself, analyses itself, makes itself what it wills. The fruits which it bears, it itself plucks and enjoys—unlike the fruits of plants and the produce of animals which are enjoyed by others. At whatever point the limit of its life may be fixed, it attains its own proper end. Thus it is not as in a dance or play where the whole action is incomplete if anything cuts it short, but wherever and whenever it may be interrupted, it makes the life which has been given to it full and complete, so that the individual can say, 'I have what is my own.' Moreover, it traverses the whole universe, and the void beyond, and reaches forth into eternity, and embraces and comprehends the periodic regeneration of the universe; and it perceives that our fathers had no other vision, nor will our children see anything new. And thus, in virtue of the uniformity of things, a man of forty

[1] *Comment.*, XI, 1.

years of age, if he has any understanding, has in a manner seen all that has been and all that is to be, Another property of the rational soul is the love of neighbours, coupled with truth and modesty and that supreme self-reverence which is likewise an attribute of universal law, the law or reason which is one with the law of justice."

In such a passage we see a recognition of that universality of man's mind and will, of which I have spoken, his capacity for embracing the whole in his thought, and of identifying his will in action with the principle that is realising itself in that whole. But we see also that Marcus Aurelius takes that principle abstractly, as a principle manifested, indeed, in everything, but not as a principle that binds all things into a system, and connects all the successive stages of their history as parts or phases in one evolution. The Stoic sees that man's knowledge cannot be confined to any one object or class of objects, nor his desire and will to any one particular interest. He sees, also, that there is no one interest which he may not be called upon to sacrifice to the good of the whole, or to the realisation of that principle on which the whole rests. But, admitting the truth of all this, it does not carry with it the consequence which he seems to draw from it—that these interests in their totality are indifferent, and that the inner life is all in all. For the very ends or goods which the individual is

required to sacrifice in view of the whole are all elements in that whole; and if, one after another, we reject and renounce each and all of them, the whole must disappear.

We might put this in the conversational manner by which Epictetus often tries to give point to his lessons. We might suppose the Stoic to ask the question, 'Is not every finite object capable of coming into collision with the universal law, and so of standing between us and our duty?' To this we are forced to answer, 'Yes.' 'Is not, then, each such object indifferent, in the sense that its attainment cannot be weighed against the necessity of doing our duty?' To this again we should have to answer, 'Yes.' But the Stoic goes on, 'Is it not, then, true that all outward objects, that is, everything but the good will must be regarded as a mere material of life, which has no good in itself but only in the way it is handled?' Here we should be obliged to answer with a distinction. If it be meant that the good of life lies in the good will as a mere internal state of the subject, and not as the realisation of man's moral capacity in the family, in the State, and in all the various social relations into which human beings enter with each other, then we must answer, 'No.' To talk of a πολιτεία τοῦ κόσμου, a union of all rational beings with each other, is to utter a mere wish or dream of good, if this idea of universal community

is not to be worked out in detail, and to lead to a reconstitution of all the particular relations of society. And to say that the latter is indifferent and the former essential, is like speaking of an 'Invisible Church,' in which all religious men are united, while remaining content that all the branches of the visible Church should be at war with each other. At the same time, it was something that even the idea of such a universal community should be set forth as truth. It was something to direct the thoughts of men to a great idea, although the form it took was unpractical, and even impracticable. If it did nothing else, it at least set aside all lower aims as unsatisfactory, and prepared the language in which the universal conceptions of Christianity could be expressed.

And this leads me to say, in conclusion, that the Stoic philosophy was in its very essence a movement of transition, a connecting link between two stages of moral progress. It was primarily the negation of a past phase of life; and it would have been barren, if it had not pointed forwards to something more positive than itself. What it really showed was, not that men could realise a moral life in themselves without any effective social bonds to unite them to each other, but that the old bonds of society, the bonds of race and nation, had ceased to be effective, and that the only possibility of their renewal lay in

the realisation of the deeper principle of humanity. We may, therefore, fairly regard Stoicism as a recoil of man upon himself, which showed that his institutions had become inadequate to his growing life, and at the same time indicated that the only basis upon which they could be reconstituted was the unity and equality of mankind. Nor must we forget that it directly connected its consciousness of the unity of humanity with the idea that the same reason, which makes the individual man a self, is also the absolute principle revealed in the whole system of the universe.

LECTURE TWENTIETH.

THE TRANSITION FROM STOICISM TO NEO-PLATONISM.

In the preceding lectures I have tried to indicate the general scope of the ideas of the Stoics—ideas which are very important for the history of theology both in themselves and because of their influence upon Christian thought. Let me gather up the main points in a few words.

In the first place, the Stoic philosophy did a great work negatively, in so far as it lifted moral and religious ideas out of the national or racial setting to which they had hitherto been confined. It completed the work of Socrates in emancipating the individual from tradition and throwing him back upon himself—teaching him at the same time to regard this emancipation as one in which every human being has an equal share. The fact that the two greatest of the later Stoics were a slave and an emperor is itself a kind of illustration of the

levelling tendency of their doctrine. Everyone from the highest to the lowest was taught by them to regard himself as a law and an end to himself, and to recognise the same universal right and the same universal duty as belonging to all men in virtue of their common humanity. It was this idea, under the name of the 'law of nature,' which inspired and guided generations of Roman lawyers, and which gradually transformed the narrow legal system of a Latin town into the great code of Justinian, that body of legislation upon which the jurisprudence of all civilised peoples is based. At the same time, the levelling and universalising influence of Stoic ideas was felt in all the literature of the later Empire, and did much to complete the humanising work which was begun by the spread of Greek culture, and to prepare a universal language of thought in which East and West could freely communicate to each other their philosophical and religious conceptions. The idea of God as a λόγος σπερματικός—a germinative principle of reason which manifests itself in the universe, and, above all, in the spirits of men as the actual or possible members of a world community—was in itself somewhat vague and abstract; but it needed only to be vitalised by some more direct and concrete vision of truth to produce a reorganisation of the whole spiritual life of man. It could not supply the

place of a universal religion, but it prepared the soil upon which a universal religion could grow. Above all, it is to be noted that by the Stoic philosophy the individual was brought into direct and immediate relation with the divine, in a way that could only find its parallel in the later prophetic teaching of Israel.

This last statement suggests an interesting comparison. The religion of Israel, after the captivity, had ceased to be a national religion in any exclusive sense. At least the special claim put forward by the later prophets was only that the Jews were to be the divinely commissioned interpreters of Monotheism to all other nations, that "through them all the families of the earth should be blessed." And though the Jewish people generally never gave up their exclusive national aspirations, yet actually they were dispersed through the Empire, and even in their own land they did not constitute an independent State. Their unity was rather like the unity of a Church. The highest utterances of their devotional spirit were individualistic in character, expressing the sorrows and joys, the aspirations and experiences, of the individual soul in its relation to God: and as the sacrificial ritual was confined to Jerusalem, the worship of the synagogue was almost completely dissociated from it, and had become a purely spiritual service—a service of teaching, prayer,

and praise, and not of ceremonial observance. In this way the religious ideas of the Jews, like those of the Greeks, had become universalised and liberated from that which was national and peculiar; and the time had come when it was possible for them to be amalgamated, if not yet organically united, with each other.

Of this amalgamation I shall speak presently. But in the first instance I should like to refer to the way in which the two systems came to approximate so closely to one another. You will remember how the Stoics repudiated the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle because of its dualism, and asserted in the most emphatic way that there is no division of principles in the universe. Their so-called materialism sprang out of a deep conviction of the unity of the world, expressing itself in a denial of the distinction between matter and mind, which they treated as different aspects of the same thing. Yet they were quite unable to work out the consequences of such a unity, or to show how the one principle could manifest itself under such different forms. The result was, therefore, either a confusion of the two aspects or an alternation between them. The Stoics could not show how matter involves mind or mind matter. Hence in their theory of knowledge they were driven to explain the relation of mind to its object by the metaphor involved in the word 'impression'; and they were

quite unable to meet the sceptic objection that, if this analogy be taken strictly, the mind can know nothing but its own states. Again, on the same hypothesis, the individual must be conceived as confined to his own inner life, and incapable of direct communion with any one else. It was, therefore, only as each individual was identified with the universal principle of all intelligence, that he could be conceived as entering into any but external relations with other individuals. And this meant that each of them was alone in his inner life, and could escape from himself only as he found God within him. The result was that despair of the world without, and that certitude of meeting the absolute Being in their own souls, which is so characteristic especially of the later Stoics. Thus the deep principle of subjective religion, which was to find its highest expression in the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, is already present in the *Meditations* of the Stoic Emperor, who in almost every page declares his hopelessness in regard to everything that presents itself in outward experience, and then turns away to find everything restored in those convictions that are for him bound up with his inmost consciousness of self. Yet this restoration remains, like Plato's city in heaven, purely ideal. That in which Marcus Aurelius finds support and consolation, is just the *idea* of a rational order realised in that world in which empirically he finds nothing but disorder, and

the *idea* of a perfect communion of those very human spirits who, except in very rare instances, seem to be hopelessly divided from each other.

Now the later Judaism passes through a process of thought which is the same in essence, though the outward form of it shows all the difference between the intuitive and unspeculative mind of the Jew and the discursive and philosophical genius of the Greek. In Judaea as in Greece, the ethical and religious consciousness was at first closely united with the idea of nationality; and in Judaea as in Greece, the time came when the extinction of the political life of the nation made it necessary for that consciousness, if it were to survive at all, to attach itself to something more general. As the ruin of the City-State was the beginning of a cosmopolitan philosophy, so the subjection of the Jewish nation made it necessary for the prophets to seek for the realisation of the hopes of Israel in something wider than the Davidic kingdom—in a Messianic empire of a higher kind, which should embrace not only the Jews but all the races of mankind. But, as no such empire was in the way of being realised around them, the consciousness of it had to remain, like the Stoic ideal of a 'world-city,' a faith which found no support in experience, but maintained itself simply by its agreement with the higher self-consciousness of the time. What, however, the Greek

sought in an ideal, which he believed to be one with the ultimate reality of things, the Jew sought in the picture of a future, in which the whole state of the world would be changed. The insight of the Jews expressed itself as foresight; their intuitive apprehension of truth took the form of a prophecy of a reign of the Messiah, in which all evils should be redressed and all sorrows healed. But the result was very similar in both cases. The difference was only that the practical Jewish mind could not reconcile itself to a world in which the ideal was not realised, but dwelt persistently on the hope of better things in the future. If the world were for the present given over to the control of the power of evil—and it was the general belief that it was so—yet this could be only for a time, and only to try the spirits of men. Nevertheless, as the blessing was still in prospect, and not in fruition, religion had to take the form of an inner spirit of devotion which had no outward manifestation, or which was manifested, not in the setting up of the kingdom of God on earth, but only in the private union of a number of individuals who sympathised with each other in longing for it and "waiting for the consolation of Israel." The whole life of religion was thus driven inward, and became, not a worship of God as the bond of union in an actual society, but the immediate relation of the isolated soul to him. Thus the

era of ritual and sacrifice, of symbol and ceremony, by which, not as separate individuals but as members of a community, men were lifted above themselves to a sense of the principle of their common life, had come to an end; and the era of subjective religion, of the lonely struggles of the soul as it seeks for its good, and of its lonely joys as it finds that good, had begun. "What do you wish to know?" says St. Augustine to himself in his *Soliloquies*, and the answer is: "God and the soul." "Nothing more than this?" "This and this only." But this kind of subjective religion was initiated long before St. Augustine's time, and even before the advent of Christianity. It was independently originated both among the Jews and among the Greeks, and it was its existence which made the rapid success of Christianity possible. It 'came to its own' and 'its own received it.' It came to men who had turned in disappointment from the world and had fallen back upon themselves and upon God; and it quickened to life their vague certitude that in spite of all, the ideal must somehow and somewhere be realised.

We have thus, as the general result in both cases, a religious consciousness which is subjective, but which, as it is universal, cannot be content to remain subjective. We have a religion which brings the individual into direct relations with God, and

withdraws him from all special connexion with the world and with his fellow-men. The keen interest in knowledge for its own sake which was characteristic of the age of Plato and Aristotle is lost, and even the practical interest of realising a society corresponding to man's moral requirements has all but disappeared. The old conception of the political life has been forgotten, and the State is now regarded, not as the highest organ of man's ethical life, but rather as a purely legal and administrative institution for the preservation of the rights of person and property. And though the Jew still looks forward with obstinate hopefulness to a Messianic kingdom, and the Stoic strives to believe that the world, though it seems in the concrete to be full of folly and wickedness, is yet in some ideal way capable of being regarded as an ordered system in which reason is the only ruler; yet in both cases this ideal remains an aspiration, a faith or hope which derives no support from experience. The Jew did not believe that the Messianic kingdom could come by any natural development out of the actual state of things, but only by a sudden and miraculous interference from above; and the Stoic could scarcely be said to hope for anything, but rather to be content, as Plato in the *Republic* tried to make himself content, to treat the bare idea in the soul as if it were its own realisation. The wise man lives by the laws of a city in the heavens which is not and

cannot be realised anywhere on earth—a city which, in Tennyson's language,

> "is built
> To music, therefore never built at all,
> And therefore built for ever."

We have now to trace the connexion between the attitude of thought we have been describing, and that to which it gave place in the last age of Greek philosophy. Stoicism contained a principle of dissolution in itself. It rested on the immediate identification of the individual subject with universal reason. The individual, in other words, was conceived to be strong in himself, just because, as rational, he was lifted above his own existence as this individual. He had a proud consciousness of his own liberty, just because he refused to identify himself with anything finite or transitory in himself or in the world. This, in the main, is the point of view of the earlier Stoics, and it is that which must be most prominent in our minds when we try to characterise the moral attitude of Stoicism. But there is another aspect of the Stoic doctrine which, if it were emphasised, would turn the strength of the Stoic into weakness and his pride into humility. The individual subject cannot be identified with divine reason, except by a process in which he is stript of all that belongs to him as this particular individual. He can only live to God as he dies

to himself. This point of view could never completely prevail in the Stoic school, but we find traces of it in the later Stoics, especially in Seneca and Marcus Aurelius. In these writers we find the beginnings of a tendency which was to find expression in subsequent philosophy and, in particular, in the philosophy of the Neo-Platonists—a tendency to substitute self-despair for self-confidence, and through self-despair to rise to the religious spirit that loses to find itself in God. This change, which seemed to lead to an attitude of spirit the very reverse of that of the Stoics, was yet, as I have said, the natural development of Stoicism. But the transition was mediated by the attack upon the doctrines of the Stoics, and indeed upon all positive philosophical doctrines, which was made by that school of philosophers called, *par excellence,* the Sceptics.

To understand this, we need to remember that not only the Stoics but the Epicureans and, indeed, all the philosophers of the time were individualistic. Their main effort was to make the individual strong in himself and independent of the world; but they all committed the inconsistency—as it seemed to the Sceptics—of basing this strength upon some belief as to the nature of that world as it is in itself apart from our thoughts about it. The Sceptic, on the other hand, maintained that no such external support is necessary. We cannot know anything about the

real nature of things, for, as is admitted by all these schools of philosophy, we know them only through our own sensations and ideas, and these sensations and ideas are only states of our own subjectivity. We thus know nothing but ourselves. But neither is it necessary to our peace that we should know anything else; on the contrary, he who rests on anything external to himself is resting on something of the truth or reality of which he can never be sure. We cannot know things in themselves, but only how they appear to us. The only secure course is, therefore, to refrain from all judgment as to the objective reality of things, and content ourselves with what is within our own consciousness. And it is just in doing so, the Sceptic maintains, that the individual can find the peace he seeks. For, if we rest in ourselves without committing ourselves to any affirmation as to objective reality, we hold an impregnable position, a position which cannot be invaded by any doubt or fear; and in the negation of all theory we find that very security and unity with ourselves which the dogmatic philosophies sought in vain. The man who has thus, as it were, retired into himself, is beyond the reach of disturbance. The whole Sceptic philosophy is just an attempt to prove the exclusive rationality of this attitude of mind by a systematic attack on all forms of dogmatism. The Sceptic endeavours to show

that every positive doctrine as to the nature of things is embarrassed by the ἰσοσθένεια τῶν λόγων, by the fact that there is an equal weight of reason for and against it. Reason, to put the matter in a more modern way, is essentially antinomical, and its exercise on any question invariably leads to the rise of two opposite dogmatisms, each of which is strong in its attack upon the other, but weak to defend itself. The only safe course, therefore, is to renounce all dogmas whatsoever, and to fall back upon the bare subjective consciousness as all-sufficient for itself.

At first the position of the Sceptic might seem to be a very strong one, and, indeed, some have thought it to be impregnable. But it really shows itself to be the weakest of all dogmatisms whenever it turns from the task of attacking others to that of defending itself. This may be seen whether we look at its positive result, or at the basis of certitude on which it is supposed to rest. From the former point of view, it is obvious that the Sceptic does not get rid of the objective consciousness by asserting that it is only a consciousness of shows or appearances. These shows or appearances, on the contrary, supply for him as for others the whole content and interest of life. The Sceptic, indeed, makes that content almost worthless, and weakens the interest in it by treating it as a mere appearance; but he has nothing else to put in its

place. He has to play the game of life like others, though he is convinced that it is an illusory game, and, that the prizes in it are worth nothing; and therefore he is not in earnest in playing it. But a life that is occupied with nothing but vanity must itself be vain. We cannot say that such a consciousness is at rest in itself. We must rather say that it is given over to endless unrest, in so far as it is continually denying the reality and value of the objects, with which nevertheless it has continually to occupy itself.

But it will be contended that the soul of the Sceptic finds its rest *just in* the assertion of itself which accompanies its negation of the reality of everything else; and that in this point of view the Sceptics anticipate Descartes, who sought for the basis of all truth in the *Cogito ergo sum* of an immediate self-consciousness—a consciousness which, as he contends, is untouched by any of the doubts which may be cast on other things. We have, however, to consider, what Descartes and the Sceptics equally forget, that this consciousness of self is realised only with, and in relation to, the consciousness of the not-self to which it is opposed, and that, if we could altogether cancel the latter, the former would disappear with it. Hence it is impossible without contradiction to fall back on the consciousness of self to the exclusion of everything else. This objection was brought home to the Sceptics by an argument based

upon their own doctrine, which they vainly endeavoured to repel. It was pointed out that, in asserting the incomprehensibility of things and the impossibility of knowledge, they were setting up a dogma which could be turned against itself as easily as against other dogmas. They were, as Bacon said, making a dogma of the unknowableness of things; and this dogma was, indeed, essential to that which they conceived as the practical end of philosophy, the attainment of peace in themselves. If, therefore, their doctrine were true, the practical end was impossible of attainment. This attack the Sceptics could meet only by the strange assertion that the doctrine of the impossibility of attaining truth included itself, and that, as they express it, it was like a medicine which purged itself out as well as the disease. But this is an obvious subterfuge; for a negation that includes itself contradicts itself; and, indeed, it is impossible to realise it at all, except by a *progressus in infinitum* in which each step is the negation of the previous step. We deny, and deny our denial, and deny that again, because we cannot separate any denial from a positive assertion which, *ex hypothesi*, must in its turn be got rid of. This process of thought, therefore, is a continual attempt to leap off one's own shadow, or, in other words, to deny without any affirmative basis for our denial.

The philosophy of the Sceptics, then, may be

said, in a sense which they did not intend, to purge itself out along with the disease; it is the *reductio ad absurdum* of itself. It is the attempt to get beyond the intelligible world by an act of the intelligence itself. But, as I have said elsewhere,[1] any attack upon the possibility of knowledge is foiled by the impossibility of finding a ground on which to fix its batteries: for if we try to fix them on anything *within* the intelligible world, we assert the knowableness of that world in the very act of denying it, and there is no place *without* the intelligible world where they can be fixed. We can direct our doubts or our denials against any particular assertion or doctrine, only in so far as we can fall back upon some more general consciousness of the real, which we assume as true, and with which we show it to be inconsistent; but an attempt to attack the very idea of truth and reality only leads to a reassertion of it in another form. On the other hand, to assert that the subject of knowledge is complete in itself without the object, is to rend the seamless garment of truth by setting up one element of consciousness against the whole to which it essentially belongs. But the only result that can come of such an attempt, is to show that, apart from the whole, every such element becomes meaningless and self-contradictory.

[1] *The Critical Philosophy of Kant*, I. 5; II. 42.

Now, in this result we see at once what is the mistake of a purely subjective philosophy and how it can be corrected. For what it forces us to realise is that the consciousness of the subject, like that of the object, presupposes a unity in which both are contained as elements. Or, to put the same thought in a more direct way, the consciousness of God, as the unity in all things and beyond all things, is the presupposition of both, and neither has any reality apart from it. Thus the logical result of Scepticism is to reveal the ultimate basis of all truth. This is not, of course, seen by the Sceptics themselves; but it underlies the general movement of thought by which the era of subjective and individualistic philosophy was brought to an end and the era of religious philosophy initiated. In this we have a remarkable illustration of the natural course of the development of thought. Philosophy in Greece, as elsewhere, begins with the objective, the not-self; then it turns from the outward world to the self; finally, it ends with the effort to grasp the principle of unity which is beyond this and all other oppositions. Unfortunately in Greece the movement from one idea to the other was mainly by a process of abstraction, in which thought as it advanced altogether set aside its previous points of view. The result, therefore, was a theology which vindicates the reality of the Divine Being at the expense of

all his creatures, and represents the Absolute and Infinite as excluding rather than as including all that is relative and finite. The failure of Stoicism to work out successfully its idea that there is an immanent principle of unity under all the differences of things and of our knowledge of them, leads subsequent philosophy to conceive God as essentially transcendent. But in this way it becomes impossible to suppose that there is any rational connexion between him and the world, or any rational apprehension of him by the human mind. If under such a view there is to be any relation established between God and man, the activity that produces it must be entirely on God's side, and on man's side there can be only passivity. And if any human consciousness of God remains possible, it must be in an ecstatic condition in which man is rapt beyond himself so that all self-consciousness is absorbed and lost. Hence we have an apparently paradoxical result, the rise of a philosophy which might from one point of view be called Agnosticism, and which yet does not mean disbelief or doubt, but rather the profoundest certitude of the reality of the Absolute Being, whom man's thought cannot measure nor his words express.

Now in this aspect of it also there is a parallel movement of Jewish with Greek thought. Even within the books of the Old Testament, we can trace

how the universalising process to which the religion of Israel was subjected, produced an increasing unwillingness to attribute the definite characteristics of human individuality to God, or even to admit his direct agency in relation to men. Such agency is rather referred to some special power or attribute of God, to his Wisdom or his Word, or to some angel who has a mission from him to man. Moreover, though there is no thought of denying God's omnipotence, yet anything that seems to have the nature of evil is rather attributed, directly at least, to some evil spirit. And we know that before the Christian era this tendency had hardened into a doctrine of demoniac influence, and this world was even supposed to be subjected to the rule of Satan, up to the time when the Messiah should come to dethrone him. The loyal allegiance of the race of Israel to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose worship was bound up with the national life, was changed into an awful reverence for a Being who, just because he was conceived as the God of the whole universe, seemed to be too high to be comprehended or even approached by the reason of man. The idea that "no one could see God and live," the idea that man cannot measure or understand God, the idea of the absolute passivity and powerlessness of man in relation to God,—these ideas take complete possession of the religious mind. God is so far from his worshippers that he cannot be

apprehended by them, yet so near that no room is left for any consciousness of freedom, or for the special interests of politics or science, of literature or art. A form of piety has arisen which begins and ends in religion, and which can hardly be said to supply any principle to idealise and elevate the secular life of man.

But along with this tendency to reduce the idea of God to an abstraction, till it becomes hardly possible to say anything of him except negatively, we have the appearance, both in Jewish and in Gentile literature, of another idea to which I have already alluded—the idea of mediation. The extremes which cannot be brought together directly, have to be linked with each other by means of intermediate terms. This tendency shows itself in Greek philosophy mainly in the adoption of the Stoic idea of the *Logos*, which, however, is now treated not as a name or attribute of the Supreme Being, but as the equivalent of the world-soul of Plato, that is, as the organ of the manifestation of the Supreme Being in the finite universe. Among the Jews, again, it shows itself in the tendency which I have already mentioned, to personify some attribute of God, especially his wisdom, or to bring in the ministry of angels between him and his creatures. If God be secluded in his heaven where no one can see him, yet a ladder is let down to the earth, by which divine influences may descend upon

the worshipper, and by which he may be drawn up towards the source of his, and of all existence. Yet, after all, the final contact of human and divine is regarded as inexplicable, except as a trance or ecstasy in which the finite drops away from man and, in some incomprehensible way, he loses and finds himself again in God.

We have now seen what were the general features of the movement of thought towards the end of the pre-Christian era. We should need, of course, to introduce many special qualifications, if we attempted to apply the description to any particular writer. Still, enough has been done to show that, at this epoch, Jew and Gentile were tending in the same direction. Even apart from any direct influence upon each other, their thoughts were prepared to blend; and, when they did blend, it was natural that the common tendencies should be strengthened. Yet I think it essential to a comprehension of the facts that we should clearly realise that it was not the case, as is sometimes represented, that Western was overpowered by Eastern thought. Each found something in the other to help its progress in the direction in which it was naturally developing, but we cannot say that either was warped from its natural tendencies by a foreign influence. Hence each may be explained from its own history. Thus the tendency to separate God from man, and to

thrust in mediators between them, and the tendency to take an almost pessimistic view of the world in its actual state, were the natural consequences of the universalising process which had begun to transform religion as early as the first prophets. And, on the other hand, when we come to Plotinus, who is the highest product of Neo-Platonism, we shall find him referring back all his doctrines to the previous philosophy of Greece; and, what is more, we shall find that he can point to sources in Plato and Aristotle, or even earlier philosophers, from which every element in it could be derived. And, though we cannot say that he simply reproduces his authorities, we are obliged to recognise that his doctrines are legitimate and even necessary developments of theirs.

Before, however, we can deal with Plotinus, it seems necessary to say something of a remarkable writer in whom the two lines of development of Jewish and Greek thought meet together, illustrating and explaining each other—a writer, who did not, indeed, succeed in reconciling these different elements, but who by his syncretism did much to bring to light their essential identity. For it was Philo who, more than any other single writer, prepared the way for that marriage of Greek thought with Christianity which was the main agency in the development of theology in the early church.

LECTURE TWENTY-FIRST.

THE PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY OF PHILO.

In the last lecture I said that Philo occupies a peculiar position in the history of theology, because he, more than any other writer, exhibits to us the process by which the two great streams of thought, from Greece and from Judaea, came to unite in one. Just at the time when Christ was teaching in Galilee, Philo in Alexandria was using the lessons of Greek philosophy to guide him in his interpretation of the Old Testament. And in one sense he was quite justified in doing so; for the development of Jewish religion had brought it to a point of view closely analogous to that which had been reached by the independent movement of Greek thought; and in the later books of the Old Testament we can discern the elements of that spiritual and universal conception of religion, which is found in Philo. Philo, therefore, it might be said, was only reading backwards into the earliest expressions of the religious

ideas of Israel what was implicitly contained or involved therein. He was only looking for the oak in the acorn, for the man in the child, when in the books of the Law and the Prophets he sought for the source of his own conceptions of God and of his relations to the world.

But, even allowing that there is a measure of truth in this view of the case, we have to observe that what Philo tries to prove is not that his own doctrine is contained potentially, or in germ, in the Hebrew Scriptures. He has no conception of a historical process of evolution, nor does he make any distinction between what is implicitly contained in the Old Testament and what is explicitly expressed there. To him the Old Testament as it stands, especially the teaching of the books of the Law, is the absolute revelation of divine truth, the verbally inspired word of God, which contains once for all the declaration of God's nature and will. And as there is much in Philo's view of that nature which is not found in the letter of the Scriptures, nay even much that seems to contradict it, he is forced to maintain that that letter was intended to convey a higher truth than its immediate and obvious meaning, and that the facts narrated and the expressions used are to be understood as an allegory. So far does Philo carry this view that he contends that some things, which in their direct sense are

irrational and even immoral, have been put into the text to warn the reader to look deeper for the real meaning. By a process which is sometimes called 'spiritualising,'—a process similar to that which St. Paul applies to the story of Hagar and Ishmael,—Philo gets out of the Old Testament all the conclusions to which he is led by the philosophical and religious consciousness of his own time; and he never seems to be aware that he brings with him the greater part of what he seems to find. We cannot discover in his writings any attempt to gather up the general meaning of the books of the Old Testament, or to view the parts in relation to the whole, or the earlier in relation to the later revelation of divine truth. He simply takes each chapter, verse by verse, and interprets it by certain arbitrary rules of symbolism—taking, for instance, the earth in the narrative of the creation to mean sensibility and the heavens to mean intelligence, and arguing that, when it is said that the heavens were created before the earth, it means that intelligence is prior to sense. On such a method it is not difficult for him to find, even in the first chapters of Genesis, all the main principles of his own theology.

Now this method of allegorical interpretation, which was afterwards extensively used by the Christian Fathers, and which is not altogether disused in the

present day, had one recommendation. It enabled those who employed it to find a basis for their religious life in the sacred books, without being limited by the immediate meaning of those parts of the Bible which expressed the moral and religious ideas of an earlier time. It served, in fact, the same purpose, which in more modern times has been served by the theory of evolution, enabling men to connect the present with the past without allowing that connexion to become a hindrance to progress. We may realise how great a service this was, if we remember how in modern times, as among our own Puritans and Covenanters, the acceptance of the Old Testament as equally inspired with the New produced a reactionary tendency to confuse Christianity with Judaism. Such misconceptions were to a great degree precluded by the allegorical method of interpretation. Still we must acknowledge that it was, after all, an arbitrary and unscientific method, and that it altogether precluded a true view of the religious history of man, which must neither deny the fundamental identity of man with himself in all ages, nor the difference of the phases through which he has had to pass in his development.

In considering Philo's theology we have to remember the characteristics of the two terms between which he is seeking to mediate. His task is to translate Hebrew conceptions into their Greek

equivalents, and to bring Greek conceptions into a form suited to the Hebrew mind. But, in every formal respect, the Greek and the Hebrew ways of thinking are antagonistic, even where the matter or content of their thought is most similar. The Hebrew mind is intuitive, imaginative, almost incapable of analysis or of systematic connexion of ideas. It does not hold its object clearly and steadily before it, or endeavour exactly to measure it; rather it may be said to give itself up to the influence of that which it contemplates, to identify itself with it and to become possessed by it. Its perceptions of truth come to it in a series of vivid flashes of insight, which it is unable to co-ordinate. For the most part it expresses its thought symbolically, and it constantly confuses the symbol with the thing signified, or only corrects the deficiencies of one symbol by setting up another. In his native language, the Hebrew has only the scantiest means of expressing the dependence of one thought upon another or of building up a connected argument. If a complex object be portrayed by him, it is only in large and indefinite outlines and never as an ordered system of related parts. Hence he is almost incapable either of grasping prosaic fact in its bare simplicity, or of rising to a scientific consciousness of general laws; he lives rather in a consciousness of the unanalysed whole, which presents itself now in one aspect and now in another, as when

one stands before a scene which is illuminated from moment to moment by gleams of lightning.

The Greek mind, on the other hand, is essentially discursive, analytical, and systematic, governing itself even in its highest flights by the ideas of measure and symmetry, of logical sequence and connexion. Even in poetry it seeks for definite pictures, in which the object represented stands out clearly from other objects and displays distinctly all the relations of its parts. Its epics and dramas have order and organisation, so that their plots work forward logically from the first presentment of the situation to the final catastrophe; and even its lyrics have plan and sequence in the evolution of the idea that inspires them. The Muse of Greece, to use an expression of Goethe, is the companion of the poet and not his guide. The same mental characteristics are shown in the political life of the Greeks, in their historical literature, and above all in their philosophy. They are never satisfied to leave anything obscure or undefined, or to let any element stand by itself without being carefully distinguished from and related to the rest. The Homeric hero who cried for light, even if it were but light to die in, was a genuine representative of the Greek spirit. Hence, in spite of their great aesthetic capacity, their love of the beautiful and their power of creating it, there never was a nation that was less disposed to rest in the

contemplation of a beautiful symbol, without trying to analyse it into its elements and discover its exact meaning. The Greek, again, was essentially reflective; he was never content to wield the weapons of thought without examining them; rather he sought to realise the precise value of every category or general term which he found himself using. And it was this that made him the creator of most of the abstract language of thought which philosophy has ever since been employing.

Now in Philo, as I have said, we find the first comprehensive attempt at a synthesis of these two modes of thought; and we need not be surprised that, in spite of the common tendencies to which I have referred in the last lecture, the amalgamation is somewhat external and incomplete. Thus, for instance, in his treatise on the creation of the world, we find him reading almost all the leading ideas of the *Timaeus* into the simple narrative of Genesis. The double account of the creation in the first and second chapters, and the phrase "every herb of the field before it grew," are supposed to express the idea that God first by the pure action of his intelligence created an ideal or intelligible world, and then, using this as his pattern, constructed the visible world out of chaotic matter. Again, the phrase: "Let *us* make man in our image" is interpreted as meaning that God, as in the *Timaeus*, has to call in the aid of

angels or subordinate powers, in order to create a being who is not altogether good.[1] Philo, indeed, thinks that in so using Plato's conceptions, he is simply restoring them to their original owner: for, in his view, Plato and the other Greek philosophers had stolen all their good ideas from Moses. But this only means that Philo had become unable to read Moses except in the light of Plato. No doubt, in this process Plato also is forced to make considerable concessions. In accommodation to Jewish notions, God must be supposed to create the matter in which his ideas are realised; and the "created gods" of the *Timaeus* have to be conceived either as angels or as powers like angels, which issue from the divine nature, but which have a certain relative independence bestowed upon them. The result, therefore, is neither distinctively Greek nor distinctively Jewish; nor can we even say that it is any *tertium quid* in which the peculiar characteristics of Greece and Judaea are united. What we have in Philo is rather the imperfect product of a process of fermentation which has not yet been completed, and in which the elements combined still retain a great deal of their original form.

Passing from these general considerations, it will be sufficient for our purpose to examine how Philo deals, first, with the idea of God: secondly, with the

[1] *De Confusione Ling.*, § 33.

mediation whereby God is connected with the world: and, finally, with man's relation to God.

I have already shown how the later development of Jewish religion tended to universalise the idea of God, and to remove those special characteristics which had been at first attributed to him as the national God of the Hebrews. Also I have shown how this process found a parallel in the movement of Greek thought, by which the Stoic conception of immanent reason was set aside and the Neo-Platonic idea of a transcendent unity took its place. Both these movements have great influence on the mind of Philo. He is continually anxious to explain away the anthropomorphic traits with which in the Old Testament God is invested. When the Bible speaks of God's hands or his feet, his eyes or his face, no one supposes that it is speaking literally. As little, argues Philo, can we take it as prosaic truth, when it speaks of God as 'angry' or being 'appeased,' as being 'jealous of other gods,' or 'repenting that he had made man.' All such expressions, we are to regard as used in condescension to the needs of those who could not understand or would not be rightly impressed by any other language. The two most important statements of the law, says Philo,[1] are, first that "God is not as a man" (Numb. xxiii. 19) and second, that "he is as a man" (Deut. i. 31): but the second is introduced for the instruction

[1] Philo, *Quod Deus Immut.*, § 11; *De Somniis*, I., § 40.

of the mass of mankind, and not because God is such in his real nature. In other words, when the Scripture speaks of God as if he were a man, and attributes to him the acts and motives of men, it is by way of accommodation to the wants of those who are intellectually and morally at a low stage of culture; but for those who have got beyond this stage, whose intelligence is not limited by their imagination, and whose will is not governed by selfish fears and hopes, there is another lesson. *They* can rise to the consciousness of God as the absolute Being, to whom none of the attributes of finite things or beings can belong, not even those of humanity. Of this being we know only *that* He is and not *what* He is; and this is what is meant when God is spoken of by the name "I am that I am," which is equivalent to saying that God's true nature is not expressible by any name. We know him only *negatively*, and not *positively*: for all the predicates we can possibly attach to Him are predicates which express the contrast of his pure being with the limited and determined nature of finite creatures. Thus He is represented as *one* in opposition to their division, as *simple* in opposition to their complexity, as *immutable* in opposition to their variableness, as *eternal* and *immeasurable* in opposition to their conditioned existence in time and space. But these attributes are all to be taken as simply repelling from him every qualification by which He might be

reduced to the level of his creatures, and not as expressing the infinite fulness and completeness of his own Being, which is incomprehensible to the mind of man. To determine what He is in his essential being would be impossible; for to define is to relate, and He is above relation. Even the words, "I am thy God," are, Philo declares, employed in an inexact and figurative way, and not in their primary sense; for the self-existent Being, regarded simply as self-existent, does not come under the category of relation. "He is full of himself, and sufficient to himself, equally before and after the creation of the universe; for He is unchangeable, requiring nothing else at all, so that all things belong to him, but He, strictly speaking, belongs to nothing."[1] These last words show the true movement of Philo's thought, which carries everything back to the absolute Being, but will not allow us to invert the process, or to see in the nature of that Being any necessity for the existence of any being other than himself; seeing that this would make him dependent on his creatures or responsible for their imperfections. In other words, they are regarded as related and essentially related to him, but not He to them.

Now this is just the logic of mysticism or pantheism, which carries back everything finite to the infinite but cannot think of the infinite as manifested in the

[1] "De Mutatione Nom.," § 4: quoted by Dr. Drummond, *Philo Judaeus*, II, 48.

finite. But it was impossible for a pious Jew like Philo to be a mystic or a pantheist, and so to reduce the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to an absolute substance, in whom all the reality of the world is merged. Philo might be ready to treat as allegorical all the expressions that seem to attach any physical character or any of the limitations of fallible, finite beings to God; but he could not part with God's personality or sacrifice God's moral to his metaphysical attributes. The phrase 'strictly speaking' in the passage just quoted partly hides and partly betrays Philo's consciousness of the necessity of finding *some* way in which the expression 'my God' might be justified, and God might be conceived as going out of himself and relating himself to his creatures. Or, if God in his pure essence were regarded as above such a relation, some power emanating from the divine must be found to mediate the transition. The first naïve solution of this difficulty—a solution which lay very close to the Hebrew mind—was to attribute to God's *will* what could not be referred to his nature; and to say that God had chosen "out of his mere good pleasure" to create a world and to promise certain blessings, first, to the race of Israel, and then through them to mankind, on condition of their obedience to his revealed will. And when objections arose, they could always be silenced, as they were by St. Paul, with the question: "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against

God?" But to take this course was to cut the knot instead of untying it; and Philo was too much imbued with the spirit of Greece to rest in the bare idea of will without reason.

The sacred books, however, when interpreted in the light of the conception of the *Logos* supplied him with a better solution of the difficulty. Originally, indeed, the expression 'Word of God' had not carried with it any notion of mediation, or of a mediating being. On the contrary, in such passages as: "By the word of God were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth," what the writer sought to convey was rather the idea of a direct divine action which needed no mediation or instrument whatever. But gradually, as the idea of God became universalised, the same feeling which caused the name of 'Jahveh' or 'Jehovah' to be avoided, and the word 'Lord' substituted for it, gave rise to an inclination to attribute divine acts not to God but to some personification of one of his attributes, generally of his wisdom. This tendency is shown in *Ecclesiastes* and also in a still more decided form in one of the apocryphal books, *The Wisdom of Solomon.* And for Philo, who wrote in Greek and under the influence of Greek philosophical ideas, the Stoic use of the word *Logos* to express the rational principle which is immanent in man and in the universe, seemed to throw a new light on those numerous passages in

the Old Testament in which the phrase 'Word of God' is used in a half-personal way. We may thus explain how Philo arrives at the notion of the Word, as a second divine principle, which connects the absolute divine power with the world—a God who reveals, as contrasted with the God who hides himself: a principle through which God creates and governs the universe, through which he binds all the parts of the finite world to each other and unites it as a whole to himself. In fact, we find concentrated in the idea of the *Logos* all that Philo has to say of God's revelation in the world as opposed to his absolute essence; and he is very fertile in forms of expression to convey the relation of this principle of revelation to God and to man respectively. In the former aspect, the Word is declared to be the Son of God, the first-born, the highest archangel, the oldest of the angels: in the latter aspect, he is said to be the man who is the immediate image of God, the ideal or prototype in whose image all other men are created.

If, however, we ask whether the Word is to be taken as an aspect of the divine nature or as a separate individual being, we find that the language of Philo is very ambiguous and uncertain. He seems to fluctuate between modes of expression which point to something like Platonic ideas, and modes which suggest the conception of the angels of the Old Testament. The separation and relative independence of the

Logos is specially emphasised when Philo is speaking of the creation of man. "Why is it," he asks, "that God declares that He made man 'after the image of God,' and not after *his own* image, as if there were another God in question? This oracle of God is of the highest value, and what it expresses is literally true; for no mortal being could have been formed in the similitude of the Supreme Father of the universe, but only after the pattern of the second Deity, who is the Word. It was necessary that the rational part of the soul should exhibit the type of the divine Word. But while God's Word is higher than the highest rational nature, the God who is higher than the Word holds a place of singular pre-eminence and glory, and no creature can be brought into comparison with him."[1]

This passage seems certainly to suggest personal agency; yet in other places Philo seems rather to speak as if the Word were only a general name for all the attributes of God. I think, however, that two things may be made out clearly: first, that the idea of the *Logos* gains importance for Philo just because his primary conception of God is such as to make it impossible to connect Him directly with the finite: and secondly, that the Logos is viewed as the principle of all the activities that are involved in that connexion. In particular, Philo speaks of

[1] *Quaest. et Solut. in Genesin II.*, § 62.

two attributes or active powers which find their manifestation in the world, the power by which He creates and sustains the world, and the power by which He rules it: powers which roughly correspond to his *goodness* and his *sovereignty*; and he thinks that the two terms 'God' and 'Lord,' *Elohim* and *Adonai*, are used in the Bible to designate and distinguish these two powers. Thus he tells us that, while meditating on the two Cherubim who were stationed with flaming swords at the gates of Paradise, he was suddenly carried away by a divine inspiration which made him speak like a prophet concerning things he did not know. And the revelation then made to him was that in the one God there are two powers, goodness and sovereignty, and that it is by goodness that God made the world and by sovereignty that He rules it; but that there is a third Being uniting the other two, namely, the Logos, "since it is by the Word or reason of God that He is both sovereign and good. . . . For reason, and especially the causal reason, is a thing swift and impetuous, which anticipates and overpowers everything, being thought before all things, and manifesting itself in all things."[1]

In some passages it seems as if this duality of powers, and even the Logos in whom they are united, were regarded merely as an *appearance* which is due

[1] *De Cherub*, § 9.

to the imperfect apprehension of truth by the finite mind: as where it is declared that "God appears in his unity when the soul, being perfectly purified and having transcended all multiplicity, not only the multiplicity of numbers but even the dyad which is nearest to unity, passes on to the idea which is unmingled, simple and complete in itself."[1] But if this way of thinking were followed out to its utmost consequences, the world itself must disappear in the highest Being, who is above all relation. Hence it was a logical necessity for one who would not reduce the world to an illusive appearance to regard the primal unity as going out of itself and producing a manifestation which was relatively independent of it. And from this point of view the idea of the *Word*, through whom this manifestation takes place, could not be treated as merely an accommodation to an imperfect mode of human thought.

The truth is that Philo brings the dualism, which, as we have seen, was latent both in Hebrew and in Greek thought, to a more definite expression than it had hitherto reached. He holds, on the one hand, to the idea of an absolute God, pure, simple and self-subsistent; yet, on the other hand, he cannot avoid conceiving God as a principle of being and well-being in the universe, who binds all things to each other in binding them to himself. And he

[1] *De Abrahamo*, § 24.

puts these two aspects together as 'two Gods,' who yet must in some way be reduced to unity.[1] But it was impossible for Philo to explain the nature of this unity without either giving up the conception of what God is in himself, or reducing the relative independence of the principle that manifests itself in the universe to an illusion. Sometimes, as in the passage just quoted, he approaches the former solution of the difficulty: sometimes, as when he is speaking of the goodness of God as the cause of the existence and preservation of his creatures, he approaches the latter solution of it. But he never definitely brings the two conceptions together, nor does he realise fully the consequences of either alternative.

We are, therefore, left with the idea of an absolute substance which, strictly taken, would exclude all difference and relation, even the difference and relation of subject and object in self-consciousness; and, on the other hand, with the idea of a self-revealing Word, who manifests himself in and to his creatures. And Philo employs all the resources of symbolism, allegorical interpretation, and logical distinction, to conceal from others, and even from himself, the fact that he is following out two separate lines of thought which cannot be reconciled. All that he can say is that one of these Gods is subordinate to the other. The *Logos*, he declares,

[1] Cf. Vol. I, p. 252.

is neither uncreated like God, nor created like us; but he is at equal distance between the extremes, serving as a keeper of the boundaries and as a means of communication between the two.[1] The *Logos*, then, appears as a *second* divine principle, whose office is to reveal the first God, but who can never reveal him as He is, seeing that by his very nature He is incapable of revelation: for to reveal him would be to bring into relation a Being who, *ex hypothesi*, is beyond and out of all relation. In strict logic, therefore, the revelation of God—that is, the whole universe and the divine Word who creates and sustains it,—must not only be subordinated to the Supreme Being, but must be merged and lost in him. Or, if we follow the other line of thought and dwell upon the reality of the *Logos*, we must inevitably give up the idea of his subordination: we must treat God as essentially self-revealing, and as 'beyond relativity' only in the sense that He is the source of all the existences to which He relates himself. But it was impossible for Philo to adopt either of these alternatives without surrendering what for him were the essential principles and presuppositions of all his religious and philosophical consciousness. The value of his philosophy, therefore, lies in this, that it constitutes another step in the evolution of the dualistic tendencies

[1] *Quis rerum*, § 47: cf. Herriot, *Philon le Juif*, p. 259.

that underlay Greek thought from the time of Anaxagoras, and which the Stoics vainly endeavoured to escape. And this step had a higher significance because it was partly the result of a similar movement in Jewish religion, and showed that the Eastern was involved in similar difficulties with the Western mind. For the first time in the history of the world, these two great streams of thought had run together, and a beginning was made in that process of fusion of which the whole development of Christian theology was the outcome.

The same tendencies receive further illustration when we turn to Philo's treatment of the nature of man and his relation to God. Take first the following passage in which the simple Mosaic narrative is strangely re-interpreted or rather transformed by the aid of the great myth of the *Phaedrus*: "After all the other creatures, man, as Moses says, was made in the image and likeness of God. And he says well; for nothing born on earth has more resemblance to God than man. Not, indeed, in the characteristics of his body, for God has no outward form, but in the intelligence which has supremacy in his soul. For the intelligence which exists in each individual, is made after the pattern of the intelligence of the universe as its archetype, being in some sort the God of the body, which carries it about like an image in a shrine. Thus the intelligence occupies

the same place in man, as the great Governor occupies in the universe—being itself invisible while it sees everything, and having its own essence hidden while it penetrates to the essences of all other things. Also by its arts and sciences, it makes for itself open roads through all the earth and the seas, and searches out everything that is contained in them. And then again it rises on wings and looking down upon the air and all its commotions, it is borne upwards to the sky and the revolving heavens, and accompanies the choral dance of the planets and fixed stars according to the laws of music. And being led by love, the guide of wisdom, it proceeds still onwards, till it transcends all that is capable of being apprehended by the senses and rises to that which is perceptible only by the intellect. And there, seeing in their surpassing beauty the original ideas and archetypes of all the things which sense finds beautiful, it becomes possessed by a sober intoxication, like the Corybantian revellers, and is filled with a still stronger longing, which bears it up to the highest summit of the intelligible world till it seems to approach to the great King of the intelligible world himself. And, while it is eagerly seeking to behold him in all his glory, rays of divine light are poured forth upon it, which by their exceeding brilliance dazzle the eyes of the intelligence."[1]

[1] *De Mundi Op.*, § 23.

It is easy to see that there is more of Plato than of Moses here; and a further consideration of Philo's psychology shows that the main difference of it from that of Plato is just that in the former the dualistic tendency is more fully developed. Plato's idea of the body as the tomb or prison of the soul, his idea of the moral life as an effort to dissociate the soul from the passions which it acquires by its commerce with the body, his idea that practical life involves a disturbance of the soul's peace and a darkening of its inner light, and that its only pure exercise is to be found in the contemplation of absolute, ideal reality —all these Platonic conceptions are literally accepted by Philo. He even gives some countenance to the extremely un-Hebraic conception that the very entrance of the soul into mortal life involves a certain tainting of its purity. Man, for Philo, is distinctly a "compound of dross and deity"; and the proper object of his life-effort is declared to be the liberation of his intelligence from its baser companion, the attainment of that apathy, or freedom from the passions, in which alone the spirit can energize freely according to the inmost tendency of its own being.

Philo, however, could not rest satisfied with this view; he could not, like a Stoic, fall back on the inner life, and seek to emancipate it as far as possible from entanglement with the world; for he had learnt

that man can as little find his good within himself as he can find it without him. Hence he argues that the great source of evil lies not directly in our sensuous nature itself, but rather in the fact that it leads us to rest in ourselves and not in God. Thus, speaking of the passage in Genesis that tells how Adam sought to hide himself from God among the trees of the garden, Philo tells us that the garden means the mind of man as an individual; and that "he who is escaping from God flees to himself." For there are only two principles which can exercise power over our life, the mind of the universe which is God, and the separate mind of the individual. He, therefore, "who escapes from his own mind flies to the mind of the universe, confessing that all the things of the human mind are vain and unreal, and attributing everything to God; while he who seeks to escape from God declares by so doing that God is not the cause of anything, and looks upon himself as the cause of all that exists."[1] Hence the soul that would attain to the heritage of God must not only despise the flesh and regard all the objects of outward sense as things which have no real existence, it must not only free itself from all the illusions of speech and opinion, but it must also flee from itself and empty itself of all self-love and all trust in anything which is its own.[2] If, there-

[1] *Leg. Alleg.*, III, § 9. [2] *Quis rerum*, § 14-16.

fore, self-knowledge be the beginning of wisdom, it is because it involves self-despair; and he only who has despaired of himself can know Him who eternally is.[1]

"Only he who dies to himself can live to God." There is a sense in which this is the highest of all truths, the truth which constitutes the essence of Christianity. But, as it appears in Philo, in connexion with a dualistic view of human nature, it seems to mean, *not* that we find God in so far as our individual nature becomes the organ of a higher spirit, but only that we find God in so far as all individual life is expelled from us or reduced to inactivity. And this appears to be the ultimate thought of Philo, which is expressed in his doctrine of ecstasy. For, according to this doctrine, the highest perfection of man is not the realisation of his nature as man, not the development of all his powers of mind and will, but an absorption of them in the divine vision, which annihilates all consciousness of himself and of the world. Philo is too much of a Jew to accept the ultimate consequences of this view; but it is obviously the conclusion to which his philosophy points, and it is only imperfectly warded off by his doctrine of the *Logos*. For, if God is not in his own essential nature a self-manifesting being, but is withdrawn from all relation to his creatures, it is clear that man can

[1] Drummond, II, p. 288.

become united to God only as he rises above his own existence as a creature.

Here also, therefore, in relation to human nature, we find Philo's ideas as to the transcendence and the immanence of God warring with each other; and, as the former is that to which he gives the precedence, the perfection of man for Philo is that he should rise not only above sense but also above intelligence, till his whole being is lost in the absolute One. Yet, on the other hand, we have to remember that, though subordinated, the ideas of God as self-revealing, and of the universe and especially man as his revelation, are never entirely lost sight of; and that the contradiction between these two views never leads Philo to abandon either aspect of his doctrine, or to seek for a narrow logical consistency at the expense of its comprehensiveness. Hence, if he has not solved the great problem of his time, we may fairly say that he first *stated it in all its fulness.* Or, to put it more directly, he first gave utterance to both of the two great requirements of the religious consciousness, the need for rising from the finite and relative to the Absolute, and the need of seeing the Absolute as manifested in the finite and relative; although he could find no other reconciliation of these two needs except externally to subordinate the latter to the former. It was this problem with which the Neo-Platonic school from its foundation

to its close continued persistently to wrestle. But we have hardly a right to say that its efforts were unsuccessful, until we have considered how it was dealt with by a man of far greater philosophical power than Philo, by the greatest of all mystics, *Plotinus*.

LECTURE TWENTY-SECOND.

THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF PLOTINUS.

PLOTINUS is one of the greatest names in the history of philosophy, the classical representative of one of the main lines of human thought; he is the Mystic *par excellence*. And what makes his Mysticism more important is that he presents it as the ultimate result of the whole development of Greek philosophy. Further, if we look to the development of thought after Plotinus, we can see that it was mainly through him, and through St. Augustine as influenced by him, that Mysticism passed into Christian Theology and became an important element in the religion of the middle ages and of the modern world.

What is Mysticism? It is religion in its most concentrated and exclusive form; it is that attitude of the mind in which all other relations are swallowed up in the relation of the soul to God. This conception may become more intelligible if we recall

one or two points in the nature and history of religion. The relation of the soul to God—of the individual, conscious of his finitude, to the whole in which he and all other creatures are embraced, and to the principle or Being who gives unity to that whole—is not at first a clearly recognised factor, much less a predominant factor, in the conscious life of man. But it is always implied in that life; it is presupposed in all our consciousness of the world and of ourselves; and reflexion makes us aware that, without the recognition of it, we cannot understand either the intelligible world or the mind that knows it. Further, it is *the* fact from which religion springs; for it is just because this idea underlies all our consciousness that we are unable to rest in any finite object, or even in the whole world of finite objects, as complete in itself or as a perfect satisfaction of all our desires; and, for the same reason, we are equally unable to find such complete reality or such perfect satisfaction in the inner life of the self or in any of its states as such.

This inability to rest in the finite as its own final explanation, or to be satisfied with it as an ultimate good, is the real source of the superstitions that darken and confuse the life of the savage. It is the source, at a more advanced stage, of that imaginative effort to idealise particular objects, and, above all, to idealise man himself, which is the creator

of mythology. Finally, as the reflective tendency, the tendency to turn back upon the self, gains predominance over the tendency to seek reality in external objects, it is the source of a subjective religion, such as appeared in later Israel, a religion that divests its God of every likeness to anything in the heavens above or in the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth, which, in short, removes from him everything but the bare nature of a thinking subject as such. In this latter religion God, as a spiritual being, seems to come close to the very self of man and to lay his hand directly upon man's inner life, upon "the very pulse of the machine"; yet at the same time to stand apart from him as another self, before whom "his mortal nature doth tremble like a guilty thing surprised." "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, there art thou: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there." The thought of God's holiness, his utter isolation and stainless purity, and at the same time of a nearness to man which is yet complete separation from him, makes the worshipper shrink into himself with an awe of which he can only partly free himself by the most scrupulous obedience to the divine laws. For to think of the Absolute as spiritual, and yet as standing over against us like another finite subject—between whom and our

own subjectivity a great gulf is fixed—is to have religion in its sternest form, a religion which may purify the soul from the base compliances of idolatry, but which at the same time is apt to petrify it in its isolation. In spite of its moral spirit, however, we have to recognise that this religion also, so long as it remains in its pure type, falls short of the idea of religion; for the worship of a God who is conceived as an abstract subject, though more elevating, is as one-sided as the worship of a God who is conceived purely as an object. And we cannot say that the principle of religion has become self-conscious, till God is clearly conceived as the unity presupposed in all being and all thought, the One who is alike beyond mere subjectivity and mere objectivity.

Now the Mysticism which finds its classical expression in Plotinus consists just in the predominant and even exclusive consciousness of this negative unity. God, for the Mystic, is the One who is presupposed in all, God as God, as the unity above the difference of subject and object, to which everything is related and which itself is related to nothing. The Absolute One is, indeed, necessarily conceived as the source of all that is; but, for Mysticism, the negative so decisively preponderates over the positive relation, that God and the world cannot be included in one thought. The religious consciousness thus tends to exclude and substitute itself for all other consciousness, leaving

no place, or at least a quite separate and lower place, for any intellectual interest in nature or man as apart from the contemplation of God, or for any practical interest in secular ends, social or individual, apart from the realisation of God's life within us. Something of the same purely religious attitude of mind had been shown, no doubt, in later Judaism; but the Jew was always defended against the extreme of Mysticism by his strong sense of the separate personality of God and man, and, as a consequence, his vivid consciousness of moral obligation as involved in the worship of God. In Plotinus, however, the barrier between the infinite and the finite is thrown down, and the former is brought into immediate contact with the latter, so that every distinction and relation of the finite vanishes away. Religion ceases to be the consecration of life or of any of its secular interests, and becomes itself the whole of life—the gulf into which man throws all his earthly joys and sorrows, the anodyne with which he puts to sleep the energies of will and thought, all the cares of his divided life, and ultimately his divided life itself. For the one supreme desire of the Mystic comes to be this: to merge the consciousness both of the world and of himself in the consciousness of God, or rather, we should say, in God himself.

Now such a view, as I have already indicated,[1]

[1] Vol. I, p. 34.

carries with it a complete inversion of all our ordinary thought. The ordinary consciousness indeed rests on the presupposition of a unity beyond all difference; but it does not directly set that unity before itself as an object, or at least, does not treat it as exclusive of other objects. Here, on the other hand, the unity is no longer presupposed, but made the immediate object of thought; and, in the direct gaze at it, everything, even the thought which makes it an object, seems to be cancelled. The world is not denied a lower kind of reality, but its interests are regarded as external to the higher life; and the soul, emptied of all finite content, can have no desire but to break down the last barrier which separates it from the divine.

At this point, however, there arises a peculiar difficulty of Mysticism, which tends even to confound it with its extreme opposite. For the mystic who finds everything in God seems to speak the same language as the Agnostic who finds nothing in him, or who finds in him only the negation of all that we can perceive or know or think. In the ascent to the divine unity, the mystic loses hold of everything by which he could positively characterise it, and when he arrives at it, it is with empty hands. He begins by separating from it everything that is material, removing from it every attribute which we attach to things conditioned by time and space.

He is thus enabled to determine it as eternal and indivisible "without variableness or shadow of turning," as resting ever in its own pure self-identity. But he cannot stop here; he must go on to deprive it of all, even ideal, activity. Thus, in the first place, he excludes from it all discursive thought, all thought which moves by inference from one point to another; for such discourse of reason, he contends, always involves incompleteness, involves that we pass from one imperfect notion to another, seeking to complete our consciousness of the object or to find an ultimate reason for it. Thus there remains only the possibility of a pure self-consciousness, such as Aristotle attributes to the divine Being, an intuitive consciousness which, in one supreme act of vision, sees the whole as one with itself through all its differences. But Plotinus declares that even such a consciousness as this, even pure self-consciousness with its transparent duality of subject and object, must rest upon a unity which is above itself. To find the absolute One, therefore, we must free ourselves from all the conditions of an intelligence which goes out of itself to any object, even if that object be immediately recognised as identical with itself. The absolute unity, which is the presupposition of all difference, is, as Plato had said, "beyond being" and "beyond knowledge"; for even the 'I am' of self-consciousness breaks away from it.

"Wherefore," says Plotinus,[1] "it is in truth unspeakable; for if you say anything of it, you make it a particular thing. Now that which is beyond everything, even beyond the most venerable of all things, the intelligence, and which is the only truth in all things, cannot be regarded as one of them; nor can we give it a name or predicate anything of it. But we try to indicate it to ourselves as we are able. When, therefore, in our difficulties about it, we say that it neither perceives itself, nor is conscious of itself, nor knows itself, it must be considered that, in using such language, we are getting at it through its opposites. Thus, if we speak of it as knowable and as knowing, we are making it manifold; while if we attribute thought to it, we are treating it as in need of thinking. If, indeed, in any way we suppose thinking to be associated with the One, we must regard such thinking as unessential to it. For what thought does is to gather many elements to a unity and so to become conscious of a whole; and this it does even when it is its own object, as is the case in pure thinking. But such a self-consciousness is one with itself, and has not to search beyond itself for anything; whereas, if thought be directed to an external object, it has need of that object and is not pure thinking. Thus that which is absolutely simple and self-sufficient needs

[1] V, 3, 13.

nothing whatever, while that which is self-sufficient in the second degree, needs nothing but itself, that is, it needs only to think itself. And its end being only in relation to itself, it makes good its own defect and attains self-sufficiency by the unity which it gives to all the elements of its consciousness—having communion with itself alone and directing all its thought to itself. Such consciousness, then, is the perception of a manifold content, as indeed is indicated by its name (*συναίσθησις = conscientia*); and the thinking which is presupposed in it, when it thus turns upon itself, *ipso facto* finds its unity broken: for even if it only says, 'I am in being,' it speaks as one who makes a discovery, and that with good reason, for being is manifold. Thus when in the very act of apprehending its own simple nature, it declares 'I am in being' (*ὂν εἰμί*), it fails to grasp either being or itself. . . . It appears, therefore, that, if there is something which possesses absolute simplicity, it cannot think itself."

"How, then, are we to speak of it?" asks Plotinus. "We speak, indeed, *about* it," he answers, "but itself we do not express: nor have we any knowledge or even thought of it. How, then, can we speak of it at all, when we do not grasp it as itself? The answer is that, though it escapes our knowledge, it does not entirely escape *us*. We have possession of it in such a way that we can speak of it, but not in such

a way that we can express it; for we can say what it *is not*, but not what it *is*. Hence we speak of it in terms borrowed from things that are posterior to it, but we are not shut out from the possession of it, even if we have no words for it. We are like men inspired and possessed, who know only that they have in themselves something greater than themselves —something they know not what—and who, therefore, have some perception of that which has moved them, and are driven to speak of it, because they are not one with that which moves them. So it is with our relation to the absolute One. When we use pure intelligence, we recognise that it is the mind within the mind, the source of being and of all things that are of the same order with itself; but we see at the same time that the One is not identified with any of them but is greater than all we call being, greater and better than reason and intelligence and sense, though it is that which gives them whatsoever reality they have." [1]

In these words we have a picture of the embarrassment of the mystic when he tries to say what is that divine unity which is above all things. He is obliged to dismiss, one after another, every predicate as inadequate, and to characterise the One as the negation of all things other than itself. Even the names 'Good' and 'One' he finally has to reject as

[1] V, 3, 14.

expressing rather what it is in relation to us than what it is in itself. And to say that this relation is negative, and that, for instance, we call it 'One' simply in opposition to the multiplicity of the finite, does not enable us to escape the difficulty; for a negative relation is still a relation, and must have some positive basis. Nor would there be any meaning even in denying a predicate of a subject with which it had no point of community.

If, therefore, we are to cut off all such community between the Absolute and Infinite and the relative and finite, we cannot even negatively relate the former to the latter. But thus we seem to be landed in the abyss of Agnosticism, and to have lost the last characteristic by which our thought could take hold of the Absolute. We cannot even determine it by negation of the finite, but have to go on to deny even our negative predicates. Such failures in our speech as to the Absolute are for Plotinus explained by the fact that the Absolute is not presented as a definite object but *κατὰ παρουσίαν ἐπιστήμης κρείττονα*,[1] in an immediate contact which is above knowledge. What we are speaking of is too near to us to become properly an object for our thought, and when we try to make it an object, we fall away from it. And the difficulty seems to be that while in every move-

[1] VI, 9, 4.

ment of our thought we always presuppose it, we are always looking from it to something else, and to look directly at it, and to realise it in itself, is for our consciousness to return, as it were, to the source from which it sprang, and to lose itself therein. It is to still all the movement of the world without and of the soul within, and to be filled with God alone. It is, in the expressive language of Plotinus, the "flight of the alone to the Alone," of the spirit divested of all finitude to the absolute One.[1]

In Plotinus then we see in an extreme form the religious inversion of man's ordinary consciousness. Our ordinary consciousness rests, indeed, as all intelligence must rest, on a presupposed unity, but it seldom makes that unity the direct object of thought, still less separates it from all other objects, as that which is central, all-inclusive and all-transcending. Nor does religion at first altogether change, though it may modify, this ordinary way of thinking. Rather, in spite of occasional movements of feeling, in which the infinite, as it were, breaks in upon the finite, it on the whole remains a secular consciousness, for which the world is a collection of independent things and beings, and the good of man's life still seems to lie in a number of separate interests—of which religion is only one, though it may be one of the most important. God is not yet represented

[1] VI, 9, 11.

as the absolute One, in whom we and all things "live and move and have their being." Thus we seem to move from one thing to another, from one interest to another, while the all-encompassing circle, within which all objects and interests are comprehended, can hardly be said to exist for us. Our thought rests on difference as the primary fact—on the difference of one thing from another and of the self from the not-self—and, if the unity be recognised at all, it is as a unity of external relation or synthesis. It is a great step in advance, nay, it is like a rending of the veil under which the meaning of life is hid, when it is realised that all the differences of our consciousness presuppose its unity. And it is not unnatural that when this consciousness first arises, it should appear in a one-sided and exclusive form. Mysticism, as it is expressed by Plotinus, represents the first overpowering realisation of this idea, in which no place, or at least no logical place, is left for any other thought. We can, therefore, understand how it is that he dwells so much upon the conception that the One is always with us and within us, though we seldom realise its nearness. But, just because we do not realise this, our life, he contends, is disorganised and at discord with itself, or rather with a principle in it which is deeper even than the self. We look outward instead of looking inward, and we look inward instead of looking upward. Our

first is that which ought to be last, and our last is that which ought to be first.

The only way, therefore, in which we can put ourselves in harmony with the truth of things and of our own being, is by an entire inversion of the usual attitude of our consciousness. "A soul that knows itself," he declares, "must know that the proper direction of its energy is not outwards in a straight line," that is, out from itself to an object, "but that it moves in that way only by external influence; while the movement that really conforms to its nature is round about a centre, a centre which is not without but within it. In this, its true movement, then, it will circle round that principle from which it derives its life, and will attach itself to the same centre to which all souls ought to cling. To that centre the gods always move, and it is because they so move that they are gods; for that which is closely attached to the central principle is divine; while a soul that withdraws itself from that centre sinks into a man with his complex and animal nature."[1] Yet Plotinus bids us remember that all this is merely an analogy; for the soul is not a circular figure in space, nor does it move in a circular course, and what is expressed by this metaphor is a relation of spiritual nearness and dependence. We have therefore to use

[1] An allusion to the *θηρίον ποικίλον καὶ πολυκέφαλον* of Plato (*Rep.* 588 C). Cf. *Phaedrus*, 230 A.

the analogy without forgetting its difference from the thing illustrated. For "bodies by their nature cannot enter into real communion with other bodies, but incorporeal things are not kept apart by corporeal obstructions. If they are separated from each other it is not by place but by difference and antagonism of nature, and when this disappears they are immediately present to each other. Now the One, having no difference in it, is, therefore, omnipresent; and we are always present to it, except in so far as we alienate ourselves from it. It, indeed, cannot make us its aim or centre, but it is itself our true aim and centre. Thus we are always gathered around it, though we do not always turn towards it. We may compare ourselves to a chorus which is placed round a Choragus, but which sings out of tune so long as it directs its attention away from him to external things; but when it turns to him, it sings in perfect harmony, deriving its inspiration from him. So it is with us: we are always gathered around the divine centre of our being; and, indeed, if we could withdraw from it, our being would at once be dissolved away, and we should cease to exist at all. But, near as it is to us, often we do not direct our eyes to it. When, however, we do so direct our gaze, we attain to the end of our desires and to the rest of our souls, and our song is no more a discord, but, circling round our centre, we pour forth a divinely inspired chorale. And in the choral dance

we behold the source of our life, the fountain of our intelligence, the primal good, the root of the soul."[1]

This passage is a good illustration of the way in which Plotinus becomes possessed with a sacred enthusiasm which turns his words into poetry, whenever he tries to express the relation of the soul to God. I quote them, however, for another purpose, namely, as expressing very clearly his view that the usual attitude of the soul is essentially perverted. In the ordinary consciousness, we take shadows for realities, and realities for shadows; we are equally blind to our own nature and to the nature of the things around us. The beginning of wisdom for us, therefore, is to renounce all that from this false point of view we seem to know. Still, even when we do make this renunciation, we are at first like men who turn from the reflexions of light in other things to the sun, and who, though they are looking at pure light, are so dazzled by it that they can see nothing at all. So, in turning our souls to the unity, which is the presupposition of all our consciousness of other things, we lose sight of every image of sense or imagination, and we are even carried beyond all the definite thought by which we distinguish one object from another. We are, so to speak, in perfect light, where we can see as little as in perfect darkness. For all definite thought of objects or of ourselves is got by

[1] VI, 9, 8.

distinction of elements within the whole, and when we turn our thoughts to the unity of the whole itself, we can find nothing by which to characterise it. Even the attempt to characterise it by negation, as we have seen, is self-contradictory: for that which is negatively related to the finite, is still finite. Thus the inmost experience of our being is an experience which can never be uttered, or which becomes self-contradictory whenever it is uttered.

This is the difficulty with which Plotinus is ever struggling, and we might say passionately struggling, using all the resources of intellect and imagination in the effort to exhibit and overcome it. To this he returns again and again from new points of view, as if driven by the pressure of a consciousness which masters him, which by its very nature can never get itself uttered, but which yet he cannot help striving to utter. He pursues it with all the weapons of a subtle dialectic, endeavouring to find some distinction which will fix it for his readers, and he is endlessly fertile in metaphors and symbols by which he seeks to flash some new light upon it. Yet in all this struggle and almost agony of effort after expression, he is well aware that he can never find the last conclusive word for it; and he has to fall back on the thought that it is unspeakable, and that his words can only be useful if they stimulate the hearer to make the experience for himself. "God," says Plotinus, "is

neither to be expressed in speech nor in written discourse; but we speak and write in order to direct the soul to him, and to stimulate it to rise from thought to vision, like one who points the upward road which they who would behold him have to traverse. Our teaching reaches so far only as to indicate the way in which they should go, but the vision itself must be their own achievement."[1] In other words, we can stimulate men and set them in the way to realise what is the inmost fact of their being; but we cannot reveal to them what everyone must discover for himself, because it lies beyond sense, beyond imagination, and even beyond intelligence, and can only be realised in an ecstasy of unutterable feeling.

There is, however, a certain ambiguity about such expressions, which it is important for us to clear up before we go further. For, up to a certain point, the language of Mysticism and the language of Pantheism are identical with each other, or separated only by subtle differences which it requires some discrimination to detect. Thus the words of Tennyson—

> "That which we dare invoke to bless,
> Our dearest faith, our ghastliest doubt,
> He, They, One, All, Within, Without,
> The Power in darkness whom we guess"—

might seem to express only that mingled certitude and despair with which Plotinus approaches the ultimate

[1] VI, 9, 4.

secret of spiritual life; but they really indicate something more. They are the utterance of one who seeks God *in* the world and not *out of* it, though in the failure of language to express the fulness of his consciousness of the Infinite in the finite, he is forced to borrow the language of an Agnostic. The positive meaning, however, is perceptible through the negation, though Tennyson is still something of a mystic.

But hear another voice in which the Pantheistic note rings out more clearly. When in Goethe's *Faust* Gretchen questions the hero of the play whether he believes in God or no, the answer is: "Who may name him, or who can venture to declare 'I believe in him?' Who can feel him, and who can dare to say: 'I believe in him not?' The All-embracer, the All-sustainer, does He not embrace and sustain thee, me, himself? Does not the heaven arch over us and the earth stand firm beneath? And do not the eternal stars arise and look down upon us as with the eyes of a friend? Do not I see eye to eye with thee, and do not all things at once press home upon thy heart and brain, and weave themselves together in eternal mystery, visibly, invisibly, around thee? Fill thy heart full with it, and when thou art entirely wrapt up in the bliss of feeling, call it what thou wilt, call it joy, heart, love, God. I have no name for it: feeling is all in all; names are but noise and smoke clouding the glow of heaven."

All this seems at first closely akin to the ecstasy of Plotinus, but there is an essential difference which reveals itself when we look more closely. We have passed with Goethe from the transcendent God of Mysticism to the immanent God of Pantheism, from Plotinus to Spinoza. But the likeness and difference of the two systems is such that it may be useful to dwell for a short time upon the comparison of them.

Spinoza, like Plotinus, rises to the assertion of the one substance by negation of all that is finite, and for him all that is determined is finite. It is his doctrine that '*determinatio est negatio*,' and that, therefore, to get rid of all negation we must drop all determination. But thus the ultimate reality will be absolutely indeterminate, and in seeking for a purely positive or affirmative being, a substance which is beyond all limitations, we seem to be landed in the most abstract of all negations. Spinoza, however, immediately identifies the idea of the *indeterminate* with that of the self-determined, the *causa sui*, which is perfectly determined by itself, and, therefore, receives no determination from without, but is rather the source of the determination of all other things. And, on this basis, he proceeds to treat the one substance as manifesting itself in an infinity of attributes and modes. It is, indeed, an important question, whether in this second

process he does not contradict the first or, in other words, whether, in the movement downwards, he can consistently reassert the reality of that which in his movement upwards he has denied to be real. But for my present purpose I need not farther explain or criticise the logic of his system. I need not ask whether Spinoza has justified his transition from the indeterminate to the self-determined, or whether, in his negation of the limits of the finite, he still leaves it open to himself to admit a reality in finite things, which is *not* negated: whether, in other words, he has a right on his own principles to conceive of the absolute substance as manifesting itself in attributes and modes. In any case it is very clear that he does so conceive it, and that for all those finite things, which he treats as negative and illusory in themselves, he finds in God a ground of reality, of a self-assertive, self-determining, self-maintaining being, which can as little be destroyed or annihilated as the divine substance itself. Nay, we may even say that for Spinoza the divine substance is not, except as it is in them. Spinoza's philosophy is, therefore, a true pantheism. Everything is lost in God, yet in a sense everything is again found in him. And God, as is indicated in the oft-quoted phrase *Deus sive Natura*, is conceived as the immanent principle of the universe; or perhaps we should rather say the universe is conceived as immanent in God. When, therefore, it is

said that Spinoza is 'not an Atheist but an Akosmist,' in other words, that he denies the reality of the world but not of God, this, if it be the truth, is not the whole truth. For to Spinoza both movements of thought—the movement by which he dissolves the finite in the infinite, and the movement by which he finds the finite again in the infinite—are equally essential. If for him the world be nothing apart from God, on the other hand, God is nothing apart from his realisation in the world.

Now this Spinozistic solution of the difficulty is not possible for Plotinus. With him the *via negativa* involves a negation of the finite or determinate in all its forms, which makes it impossible to find the finite again in the infinite. The Absolute One decisively repels the many, and cannot in any way admit difference or multiplicity into itself. Its unity, therefore, must be conceived not as immanent but as transcendent. And if it be still connected with the determinate and manifold, it must be only as its external cause or source, and not as a principle which manifests itself therein. The One must, indeed, be the fountain from which all being springs, but it cannot be the reality into which all other existence is taken up and absorbed. Plotinus is, therefore, not a pantheist but a mystic; and though he refers everything to God, yet he cannot, like Spinoza, treat either the material or the spiritual world, either extension or

thought, as the attributes of God. Hence, if in the upward movement of his logic, Plotinus distinctly leaves behind every order of being, even the intelligence, and in a sense condemns them all as unreal, yet this with him is no merging of all or any form of finitude in the infinite. Thus we have the strange paradox that the Being who is absolute, is yet conceived as in a sense *external* to the relative and finite, and that He leaves the relative and finite in a kind of unreal independence, an independence which has no value, and yet from which it as finite cannot escape. These words, indeed, as we shall see afterwards, do not express the exact thought of Plotinus, but they may serve sufficiently to indicate that aspect of his system which I am trying to illustrate, namely, that while he thinks the true attitude of the soul to be one in which the light of reason is extinguished in the ecstasy of union with God, he at the same time regards the spiritual world as in some way coming out from God, and even as repelled into difference from him. The soul seeks to lay down the burden of its finitude, to escape from the body and to rise above all the interests of its finite life; even of its very consciousness of self it would divest itself, as of something that still shuts it out from God. But this last barrier is so strong that the soul cannot, except for a few favoured moments, forget its separate existence. Thus we have, on the one side, a life which is nothing

apart from God, and which, nevertheless, can never be united to him, except as it loses itself altogether; and, on the other side, an Absolute, which yet is not immanent in the life which it originates, but abides in transcendent separation from it. It is this contradiction which gives a kind of troubled intensity to the writings of Plotinus and makes them the supreme expression of Mysticism.

LECTURE TWENTY-THIRD.

THE PLACE OF PLOTINUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY.

In the last lecture I tried to define the position of Plotinus as the great representative of Mysticism. I showed that up to a certain point the logic of Mysticism and that of Pantheism were alike. Both point to an absolute unity which is presupposed in all existence and in all knowledge; and both regard it as essential to a true view of things that the consciousness of this unity should be awakened, and that it should be treated as the basis of everything else, the principle upon which all other truth depends. Both, therefore, follow the *via negativa*, and regard our ordinary view of finite things as one that must be abandoned, and even inverted, by him who would know the reality which is hid beneath appearance. But here the similarity ends. For, in the first place, the Pantheist—at least if we take Spinoza as representing Pantheism in its most characteristic form—is one who thinks it possible to

have knowledge and, indeed, scientific knowledge of the Absolute; while for Plotinus the Absolute is beyond knowledge, and can only be apprehended in an ecstasy in which all distinct thought is swallowed up and lost. And, in the second place, Spinoza, though he agrees with Plotinus in maintaining that we must transcend our immediate consciousness of things in order to reach the Absolute, yet contends that neither the ideas of matter and mind, nor even those of individual minds and bodies, are in this process finally negated and abolished. On the contrary, they are taken up into our thought of the Absolute and reproduced from it. If, therefore, all things, as represented in our immediate experience, are treated as illusory and unreal, yet it is held that there is a higher point of view from which we can see all things in God, and that, as so seen, they have a divine reality. On the other hand, though Plotinus holds that all things and all minds presuppose the absolute unity, and that we can understand neither the world nor ourselves except in relation to it, he cannot admit that it is immanent in them or they in it. Rather he conceives the One as complete in itself apart altogether from the natural, and even from the spiritual world; nor will he admit that either sense or intelligence can apprehend God in his essential being. Hence the universe is for Plotinus a hierarchy of

powers stretching up from the darkness of matter to the light of pure intelligence; and even the highest of these powers is regarded only as a product of the Absolute and not as in organic unity with it. These powers, indeed, to use a favourite metaphor of Plotinus, are at best but the images placed outside the temple, which cannot express or represent the perfect beauty of the God within. As for the Hebrew religion there was a Holy of Holies, into which the High Priest could enter only once a year, so for Plotinus the One is a God that hides himself, and can only be apprehended by the spirit in the rare moments when it has stripped itself of all finite conditions, and even of its conscious intelligence.

Now at first it might seem impossible to explain this view of Plotinus without falling back on some eastern influence. When we consider how Plato regarded the vision of the poet and the prophet as, indeed, inspired, but an inspired madness—in other words, as a kind of intuitive perception which could give no intelligible account of itself, and was therefore far lower than the reflective insight of the philosopher, it seems absurd that Plotinus should appeal to *him*, as the founder of a philosophy which maintains that we approach nearest to the divine in an ecstatic state of feeling in which all definite thought is lost. When, also, we remember how Plato exalted the dialectical process, as enabling us

to reach a comprehension of the universe, not as a bare unity nor as a collection of separate elements, but as an organic system, in which the whole should be known through the distinction and relation of all the parts, it seems strange that Plotinus should attribute to him a theory which separates the highest unity from all difference and regards the world not as an organism, but as a hierarchy of degrees of reality, rising up to an Absolute which transcends them all. Still less, it might be thought, can we find anything like the Mysticism of Plotinus in the definite conceptions and clearly articulated logic of Aristotle, whose God is self-conscious reason, and whose interest is so far from being absorbed by theology, that it extends to every form of finite existence. And, if in the Post-Aristotelian schools we find a narrowing of such interests and a tendency to concentrate on the subjective life of the individual, yet a system like that of the Stoics, which laid such emphasis on the unity of all things, and especially on the ultimate identity of mind and matter, and which regarded God as immanent in the universe, could hardly be supposed to have much affinity with a philosophy which separated the material from the spiritual, and withdrew God altogether from the world. Looking at the history of Greek philosophy in this way, we might be disposed to regard the Mysticism of Plotinus, not as the culminating

phase of Greek thought, but rather as a complete transformation of it by some powerful influence from the East.

A closer view of the facts, however, enables us to see that the philosophy of Plotinus was no product of the East, but the legitimate outcome of the previous history of Greek speculation; and that, however Eastern influences may have affected it, they acted only as favourable conditions for its own development. It may, I think, be shown that the idea of the transcendent and unknowable unity of the Absolute is simply the final expression of that dualistic tendency, which had been working in Greek philosophy from the time of Anaxagoras.

The first step in this direction is taken in the *Philebus* and *Timaeus* in which the intelligible world of ideas, which is eternal, unchanging, and in perfect unity with itself, is set in opposition to the world of sense which exists in time and space, and is therefore essentially manifold, ever in conflict with itself and perpetually changing. Further, while this intelligible world in its unity is identified with the divine intelligence, the world of sense is regarded as having its basis or substratum in an infinite or indefinite something which Plato seems to identify with space or with that which gives to phenomena their spatial and temporal character. And, in connexion with this, Plato already gives expression to

an idea which was to play a great part in Plotinus, the idea that the sensible world is a mere image or semblance of the ideal world, and that matter is the quasi-substance in which this image is reflected, and in which it takes its peculiar form. Lastly, Plato maintains that, while the intelligible world is the object of pure intelligence, the sensible world is apprehensible only by sense and opinion. We are not, therefore, to take the world of sense and opinion as objectively identical with the intelligible world, or the intelligible world as only the world of sense perfectly understood. On the contrary, it is his view that the sensible world cannot be apprehended by the pure reason, for it has in it a material element which can be grasped only by a kind of 'spurious intelligence'; in other words, we can only explain it by imperfect analogies borrowed from the relations of things in the sensible world itself, such as the clay used by the artist to mould his figures, or the passive mirror in which reflexions are cast from without. Hence it follows that the sensible world in its spatial and temporal existence, its self-externality and change, has something which permanently baffles conception and definition.

This contrast reappears in an even stronger form in the philosophy of Aristotle. It is true that from one point of view Aristotle corrects the negative

conception of the world of sense to which Plato tended. He refuses to give that world up to opinion and reclaims it for science, which can, he holds, grasp the inmost nature of each of the substances which belong to it, and determine their essential attributes. He holds further, that, even when such demonstrative science is not possible, we can still trace out the effects of the action and reaction of substances upon each other either universally or in the generality of cases. Even in the sphere of human conduct, where contingency takes the largest place, we can find law and order. What is even more important, Aristotle, stimulated probably by his biological studies, shows a tendency in some passages to do away with the fundamental contrast between form and matter, or to reduce it to an opposition of elements which are correlative with each other. He is, however, unable to maintain this point of view or to work out an organic conception either of the world in general or of the nature of man. And the very fact that he has given to matter a more positive character than it had from Plato, in the end lands him in a more pronounced and definite dualism. This is shown both in his conception of the relation of reason to the other elements of human nature, and in his view of the nature of God and of his connexion with the world. For reason in man is conceived

as an absolute intuitive power, which yet has to realise itself in and through the sensitive nature which belongs to him as an animal; and all the speculative power of Aristotle is taxed to bring together these irreconcilable elements. In like manner, the pure self-consciousness of God, in which subject and object and the activity that relates them to each other—*νοῦς*, *νοητόν* and *νόησις*—are perfectly unified and which, therefore, is complete in itself without reference to any other object, cannot logically be conceived as going beyond itself to create the finite world of movement and change. For though the latter involves the former as that on which it depends for its existence, the former cannot be regarded as involving the latter, or as in any way essentially related to it. The world in time and space is a realisation of the pure unity of thought in a matter in which it can never be perfectly realised; but the existence of such matter seems in no way to be accounted for by the purely ideal principle of thought. Thus we are obliged to refer the world to God, but God seems by his nature to have no need of the world, and, indeed, to be incapable of acting upon it. In short, there seems to be no reason for the existence of the world at all—except the presupposed matter, which, if it exists, cannot but come under the dominion of the universal principle in so far as its nature admits.

When, however, philosophy has reached this point a further regress becomes necessary. If we can abstract from the relations of the pure self-consciousness of God to the world in space and time, this means that we can break away the self from the not-self, the pure unity of self-conscious thought from the manifoldness and externality of the objective world. And this step was taken in the Post-Aristotelian philosophy. In particular, the Stoics sought to fortify the individual against all the chances and changes of the world by teaching him to retire into himself, and to treat everything that was not in his own power as unnecessary and without value for him. It is true that the Stoic conceived himself as in his inmost being one with the Universal Reason, and therefore with God as the principle of the Universe, and that in this unity all distinctions, even the distinction of mind and matter, seemed to be transcended. But as his conception of God was not less abstract than his conception of the self, the idea of unity with God could add nothing to the idea of unity with self. To live in harmony with nature, both with the nature of the world without and with the nature of the self within, meant, therefore, nothing more than to treat every particular object and end as indifferent, and to fall back upon the simple 'I am I' of self-consciousness as complete in itself and self-sufficient.

But this immediately suggests another question and prepares the way for a further regress. If we confine self-consciousness to itself and treat it as a complete whole, which needs nothing else for its fulfilment, must we not carry our abstraction further? It was simply by reason of the division and opposition, the vicissitude and change, which are the characteristics of the world in space and time, that Plato and Aristotle regarded it as an imperfect world, a world that does not conform to the demands of the intelligence, and cannot, therefore, be regarded as altogether real. But can we escape such division and antagonism, vicissitude and change, by confining ourselves to the pure intelligence and its *κόσμος νοητός*? Does not self-consciousness itself involve division and opposition between the subject-self and the object-self—a division and opposition which is no doubt immediately transcended in the perception of the identity of the two factors, but which must exist in order to be transcended? If such difference and opposition can exist, and yet be overcome and brought to unity, why might not the same be conceived to be possible in the case of the difference and opposition of the world in space and time? If, on the other hand, it cannot be overcome in the latter case, why should we expect to find the problem more easy to solve in the case of the intelligence itself?

In one aspect of it, the antagonism between the subject and the object in self-consciousness is not the easiest, but the most difficult, of all antagonisms to reconcile, just because the opposites are not external to each other, but brought together in the essential unity of one life. Is not the greatest of all divisions our division against ourselves, the most violent of all conflicts the battle we have to wage with ourselves? What are the struggles of opposing forces in the outward world to the struggle of the solitary spirit with itself? When the soul withdraws itself from its conflict with the world, does it not often find a worse enemy within, than it had ever to face without? If we take self-consciousness in its concrete form, we soon discover that in it the universal or spiritual nature of man is at war with the special feelings and desires of the individual. If, on the other hand, we endeavour with the Stoic to purge self-consciousness from all that is particular, to raise it above all the perceptions and desires that belong to the individual as such, and to identify it with a universal reason which seeks to know and to realise nothing but reason itself, we find that it becomes emptied of all content or meaning whatsoever, except that which it derives from the very particular consciousness it rejects. Hence by a necessary dialectical transition the Stoic's pride or consciousness of inward strength passes into

its own opposite and becomes a consciousness of absolute weakness and dependence on that which is beyond itself. Thus, as we have already seen, the spiritual bankruptcy of Scepticism is the necessary result of the recoil upon the abstract self which cuts it off from every external support. With the Stoic the soul was raised to an absolute pinnacle of self-confidence by the denial of value to every particular object or interest that could influence it. But such self-confidence is close upon self-despair; and it becomes self-despair so soon as the subject, thus isolated in its subjectivity, begins to comprehend its own isolation. The Sceptic needs only to realise what he means by his own admission, that the negation of knowledge applies to the subject as well as to the object, and what we may call the comedy of Scepticism turns into tragedy. The spectator who stood aloof and watched the process of self-contradiction in which all opinions and dogmas, all objective truth and reality, were dissolved, is himself drawn upon the stage to experience the fate of the puppets he was watching. If the world we behold without is an "insubstantial pageant," we ourselves to whom it appears must be "such stuff as dreams are made on."

Now it might be said that if the consciousness of the pure subject as such be found to have no completeness or reality in itself, any more than the

consciousness of the object, the true resource is to regard them both as factors in a unity, which lose their meaning when torn away from each other, but have their value restored to them, when they are brought together as elements in one whole. According to this view, it is just by rising to the consciousness of the absolute reality of the one principle which is present both in object and in subject, both in the world and in the mind that knows it, that we learn to estimate aright the relative reality of these elements.

We may illustrate this point by reference to a controversy which has arisen in our own time in reference to the *Logic* of Hegel and its connexion with the other parts of his philosophy, especially the philosophy of Nature. That *Logic* ends with the conception of a pure self-consciousness in which all the differences of the object and the subject have become transparent, or are seen to be the essential differentiation and manifestation of the unity of the self. And the next step taken by Hegel in the beginning of his philosophy of Nature is to set up the opposite of this ideal unity, namely, the conception of the objective world determined as in space, and therefore as existing in limitless self-externality.

Now this step has often been objected to by critics of Hegel as involving a *mauvais pas*, that is, as an attempt to pass from thought to reality by a transition

which has no logical rationale. In reality, however, this step is only one, and perhaps the most obvious, of the results of the Hegelian principle of dialectic, by which the complement of an imperfect conception is sought in its opposite; and the idea that such a step is illegitimate is closely akin to the fundamental error of the Greek dualism. In truth, we cannot separate the pure unity of self-consciousness from its correlate, the world in space and time; any more than we can conceive unity without multiplicity or the positive without the negative. Either the whole conception of the nature of thought, as it is expressed in the Hegelian *Logic*, must be rejected, or this step must be taken as one of the most luminous and natural illustrations of it. In other words, the whole process of Hegel's philosophy is a movement from the abstract to the concrete: it is a process in which the statement and solution of the simpler differences and antagonisms of thought gradually leads to a deeper, more complex and comprehensive view of the subject. It is, therefore, quite in accordance with his usual method that, when he reaches the idea of self-consciousness as purely and transparently one with itself in all the diversity of its subjective and objective aspects, he should at once proceed to that which is obviously the opposite counterpart of this, the continuous self-externality of the world in space and time. And

the whole further course of Hegel's speculation is just an attempt to show that even this greatest of all antagonisms cannot be understood, except as based upon a still more complex and concrete unity: in other words, that the consciousness of self and the consciousness of the not-self cannot be made intelligible, unless they are both referred back to that which is deeper and more comprehensive than either, the consciousness of God.

To this point I shall have to return. For the present I refer to it only to illustrate by contrast the process of thought by which the Stoic gave rise to the Neo-Platonic philosophy. For the movement of speculation in Greece took a course directly opposed to that of the dialectic of Hegel. In other words, the progress of Greek philosophy was not from the abstract to the concrete, but rather from the concrete to the abstract. In the Post-Aristotelian philosophies it made a regress from the object upon the abstract subject, and endeavoured to treat the life of that subject as complete in itself. And when in turn the bare self of the subject was shown to be, in its isolation, insufficient for itself and self-contradictory, the Neo-Platonist sought to find truth by a still further regress upon the unity that is presupposed in the duality of the life of the subject, the bare One, which is beyond all difference and division. The One was, therefore, taken in its abstraction, as

having in it no difference or division, not even that of the pure self-consciousness. Yet at the same time, this unity had to be conceived as the source of all things and therefore as containing them virtually or potentially in itself. Hence we have the strange contradiction in the Mysticism of Plotinus, of which I have already spoken. For, on the one hand, Plotinus isolates the Absolute from everything and refers it to itself alone, and prohibits us from regarding it as requiring the existence of anything else than itself, or even as having any relation to such existence. From this point of view, therefore, we have to think of it as so self-contained and complete in itself that our consciousness of it falls entirely outside of it. Thus we cannot properly attach any name to it, cannot call it even 'the *One*' or 'the *Good*,' lest we should bring it down into relation with that which is other than itself. Yet, on the other hand, it is the very dependence of all other things on something beyond them that has made us assert *its* transcendent being; and we are obliged to think of it in relation to them, in order to regard it as absolute. Hence, from this point of view, we have to take the names by which we call it as expressing its true nature; we have to regard it as really the *One*, the beginning or first principle from which everything else springs, and as really the *Good*, the end to which everything else tends. We have seen a modern philosopher, Mr. Spencer, driven into

the same *impasse*, just because he is compelled to treat the Unknowable, to which he refers back all things, as also the creative force which manifests itself in all things. And, indeed, the difficulty is one which is familiar to us in some phases of ordinary religion, which refers all things to God, and yet is afraid to speak of any necessity in God's nature to reveal himself in and to the world, lest such necessity should seem to make him dependent on that which is not himself.

What, however, we have here specially to notice is that the peculiar form taken by the philosophy of Plotinus is due just to its being a kind of summary, or concentrated expression, of the whole movement of Greek philosophy. Plotinus represents the universe as distributed into a series of stages or degrees of reality, reaching up from matter to God; and in these different stages we have, as it were in an abbreviated form, the different stages in the development of Greek thought. In particular, we have to notice that he reaches his Mysticism not directly but through a previous Idealism, and we may add, through a previous Spiritualism. He is first of all an idealist who, like Plato and Aristotle, maintains the supreme reality of form as opposed to matter, of the intelligible essences or principles of things as opposed to the contingency of their particular manifestations. But farther, already in Plato and still more distinctly in

Aristotle, these universal forms are conceived as gathered up and concentrated in the intelligence, as the principle of the intelligible world, which is eternally realised in God and capable of being realised in all rational creatures and therefore in man. Aristotle, indeed, did not especially connect his view of reason in man with his conception of the divine reason. But the Stoics, who regarded reason as at once a universal principle and as constituting the self of every individual, familiarised the world with the idea of a *civitas deorum et hominum*, in which each member is an independent, self-determining being. And Plotinus, as he enters into the inheritance of Greek philosophy, accepts the Stoic doctrine of the supreme reality of spirit, while he breaks entirely with the simple identification of spirit and matter, by which the Stoics attempted to escape from dualism. He falls back, therefore, upon the spiritualism of Plato's later philosophy, and maintains the reality of the intelligence and the intelligible world, as above and beyond the world of appearance and sense, and as the source and end of all its life: and also, like Plato, he finds in the soul of the world and the soul of man a mediating principle which connects the former with the latter.

But, again, while he thus takes up the position of an idealist or spiritualist as against materialism, and in the sharpest way opposes the pure intelligence, which

abides in itself and is eternally in unity with itself, to the world of spatial externality and temporal change, which is ever in conflict with itself, he has learnt from the development of Post-Aristotelian philosophy to regard the regress upon thought, upon intelligence, upon subjectivity, as only a stage on the way to a still deeper reality, to an Absolute which in its unity is beyond even the difference of self-consciousness. Hence, while he develops the thought of Plato and Aristotle, and gives to their idealistic and spiritualistic system a sharper and fuller expression than it had found in their own writings; while he gives new definiteness to that substitution of the unity of the intelligence for the unity of ideas which is suggested in Plato's later works; and while he works out the hints of Aristotle as to the opposition between the intuitive and the discursive intelligence much more fully than is done in the *Metaphysic* and the *De Anima*, he is not content with these results, but hastens on to what seems to him a still higher point of view, and, after turning Idealism and Spiritualism against Materialism, he ends by turning Mysticism against both.

Yet none of these points of view is so insisted upon as altogether to set aside the others; and even the material world, though reduced to a world of shadow and appearance, is still left as a distinct stage of being, outside the spiritual world; while the spiritual

world and the Spirit that includes all other spirits in itself, are also maintained as a distinct sphere of being, from which finally we climb up to the One which is above being and above knowledge, and which in one way excludes and in another way includes everything else.

This account of the genesis and nature of the system of Plotinus at once suggests a special difficulty, for which he was bound to find some kind of solution. We have seen that his upward progress depended upon a negative logic, like that of Spinoza, by which all difference and determination were gradually removed as involving something finite and defective. At each successive stage, therefore, the process was supposed to get rid of an element of unreality and dependence; for, while the lower always has need of the higher, the higher is regarded as having no need of the lower to support or manifest it. Hence, when we arrive at the highest, it is treated as having no need of anything but itself. Such a process, however, is one which cannot be reversed, and it seems as if in ascending, Plotinus had drawn up the ladder after him and left himself no possibility of descending again. Yet as the existence of the lower forms of being is not denied, and the highest as absolute is that from which every other form of being must be derived, some way downward has to be found. The One, as complete in itself, has no need to create; nay, it seems as if it would be

a contradiction to its essential nature that it should create. Yet it has created, and Plotinus is bound in some way to account for the fact, and to cut the knot if he cannot untie it. And it is all the more necessary for him to do so, because the same problem repeats itself at every step of the way downwards.

Now a full explanation of the views of Plotinus on this subject would carry us beyond the point we can reach in this lecture; but one remark may be made by way of preparation, namely, that the *logical* movement of Plotinus, the movement in which he is guided by definite and explicit thought, is always upwards; while, in describing the movement downwards, he has to take refuge in metaphors and analogies, the full meaning of which is never explicitly stated or realised. These metaphors and analogies, indeed, often involve a quite different principle from that which is expressed in his account of the way upwards. To put this point more definitely. In the upward process we have, as has been indicated in the last lecture, simply the ordinary dialectic of the finite—that dialectical movement of thought which is initiated, whenever it is discerned that finite things are fleeting and unreal in themselves; or, in other words, that every definite form of existence or thought, when taken as a *res completa*, becomes self-contradictory and forces us to look beyond itself for a deeper principle of reality. Further, this dialectical movement is taken by Plotinus in a purely

negative sense; and it is not suspected by him that what, in one aspect, is negated, must in another be taken up into that higher reality which is reached by negation of it. Consequently, the end which Plotinus ultimately reaches is the absence of all determination; it is that to which we cannot even give the name of the One, except by opposition to the multiplicity which is set aside.

On the other hand, when Plotinus attempts to show how the infinite One gives forth the successive phases or degrees of reality down to the lowest, his idea of its completeness in itself seems to prevent his achieving his purpose or conceiving it as in any way going beyond itself to them. And in defect of any logical transition, he is obliged to have recourse to images which, if they mean anything, imply that the One is *not* the self-centred Absolute which it was described as being. "The Good or the One," says Plotinus, "cannot look to anything but itself: yet it is the fountain of all actualities and makes them like itself, yet without any activity directed toward them." How, then, are we to throw light on the conception of such an inactive principle which yet is the fountain of all activity? Plotinus objects to the Gnostic idea of emanation as involving that the One goes beyond itself; but yet he tells us that it, "as it were, overflows, owing to its excessive fulness of reality, and so produces another

than itself."[1] More frequently he compares it to the sun which, he asserts, gives forth light and heat without in any degree losing by its radiation. There is a "radiance that shines out around it while it abides in itself, as the sun has a bright halo round it, which it continually produces, though itself remaining undiminished."[2] And he even goes on to set it forth as a general law that everything that exists must beget some other existence which is dependent on it as an image on the original. "Thus fire produces heat, and snow does not retain its cold in itself. And above all, things that are sweet-smelling are an evidence of this; for, as long as they exist, they send forth a scent into the surrounding air which is enjoyed by all beings that are in the neighbourhood. Everything in its perfection generates another, and that which is eternally perfect has an eternal generation, producing ever something lower than itself."

Now it is at once evident that such metaphors either prove nothing at all, or they prove the reverse of what Plotinus seeks to establish. For, in the first place, I need hardly say that no material thing can act and send forth an influence without *ipso facto* exhausting some of its latent energy; and the idea that the sun pours forth light and heat without any diminution of its resources, only shows the immature

[1] V, 2, 1. [2] V, 1, 6.

state of physical science in the time of Plotinus. But, even overlooking this point, there is a false abstraction in the attempt to divide between what a thing is and does in relation to itself, and what it is and does in relation to other things. What is indicated by such metaphors, is not that anything has an outgoing or *transeunt* activity which is altogether different and separable from the immanent activity that constitutes its real being; but rather the reverse, namely, that nothing exists except as it manifests itself, and that the very idea of a self-directed activity, which only accidentally produces an external effect, is irrational and baseless. Least of all can we think of the Absolute as having an external effect which is not necessarily involved in its own nature. The metaphors of Plotinus, therefore, so far as they show anything, seem to show that an absolutely self-centred and self-directed activity is impossible, or possible only so far as the Being to whom it belongs includes all other being in his own. In any case, they give us no real explanation of the problem they are intended to solve, namely, how God, who is absolutely complete in himself, can yet be the source of existences which are external to him and not included in the process of his own life.

LECTURE TWENTY-FOURTH.

THE WORLD-SOUL AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE SENSIBLE AND INTELLIGIBLE WORLDS.

In the last lecture we were considering the way in which Plotinus deals with the Absolute One as an exclusive unity to which we rise by negation of all finitude and difference, and which, from this point of view, is opposed to everything else, while yet it has to be conceived as the source from which everything else flows. And I pointed out that these two aspects of the One, as an all-exclusive unity and yet as the fountain of all existence, are not reconciled by Plotinus, but that he hides from others and from himself the difficulty of reconciling them, by alternating between the language of exact thought and the language of imagination, generally using the former when he is following the way upwards from the worlds of sense and intelligence to the One, and the latter when he is seeking to throw light on the process downwards from the One to

the intelligible and sensible worlds. This formal difference in the mode of expression only imperfectly conceals the contradiction which arises, when the Absolute, to which all being and thought are related, is yet conceived as not in any sense relating itself to them. We have here in an intensified form a difficulty which had already risen in the Aristotelian philosophy, when God was defined as a purely contemplative activity, while yet He was at the same time conceived as the beginning and end, the first and final cause, of the universe. In Plotinus, this difficulty is doubled; for he regards God, the supreme unity, as lifted above even the contemplative activity of pure intelligence; while at the same time he has to explain how the Absolute Being, whose activity, so far as it is active, has no object but itself, should yet be the centre from which all being and thought are radiated. Further, we have to remember that this difficulty repeats itself at every stage of the hierarchy of existence. For while Plotinus always upholds the principle that a thing, so far as it is perfect, occupies itself only with itself or with that which is above itself, yet he equally maintains that it is just through this self-directed activity that it gives rise to a lower kind of being, which is its image or imperfect copy. To understand Plotinus is in great measure to discern the reasons which made him maintain this apparently contradictory doctrine.

Now I have already indicated how it is that he is so anxious to maintain the isolation of the divine unity, and to deny that it can have any outwardly directed activity. As the last great exponent of Greek dualism, he finds himself unable to think of any outgoing or *transeunt* activity of God, because in his view such activity would involve want and imperfection in God. He is ready, indeed, to repeat Plato's words that the Divine Being can have no envy in him, which should prevent the good that is in himself from flowing out to his creatures:[1] but it is impossible for Plotinus to admit that God is occupied with *them*, or with anything but himself. Hence for want of the conception of God as a self-revealing spirit, Plotinus is obliged to fall back upon the unexplained necessity, of which I have already spoken, that the highest being should produce an image or imperfect copy of itself, which again in its turn gives rise to a still less perfect image, until at last we reach the lowest and most unreal of all existences.

Frequently this relation of the higher to the lower is represented as one of *form to matter*. From this point of view the first external product of the One is said to be an ideal matter in the shape of a potential intelligence; and this, by turning to the One that is its source, becomes developed into an active or

[1] V, 4, 1.

actual intelligence. Thus, to take one passage for many, Plotinus says:[1] "The first genesis of being is this. The One, being perfect so that it seeks and needs nothing, yet through its very perfection overflows, and its superabundance produces another than itself: but that which is produced turns itself towards the One, and, being fulfilled by it and contemplating it, it becomes intelligence. Thus, while its permanent relation to the One gives it being, its contemplation of the One gives it intelligence. Standing, therefore, in relation to the One so as to behold it, it becomes at once being and intelligence." Thus the intelligence, as one with the intelligible world, forms the first stage in the hierarchy of 'degrees of reality,' which surround the divine unity.

But, in the second place, the pure intelligence, with the intelligible world which is its object, is declared to be too perfect not to produce another like itself, though inferior to it, namely, the world-soul; and here also the production is described as primarily the genesis of a potentiality, a soul in *posse*, which by turning to the intelligence becomes formed and realised. This world-soul is the lowest stage of the ideal or spiritual world, and it is distinguished from the intelligence in so far as in it the difference of one idea from another is more definitely actualised. In other words, instead of

[1] V, 2, 1.

dwelling, like the intelligence, in one unbroken intuition of the whole, the world-soul moves from one idea to another, though still keeping up their unity with each other and overcoming or transcending the distinctions and divisions which it produces. This completes the Trinity of Plotinus, which, like that which appears in the theology of Origen, is a Trinity of subordination. But the process of descent still goes on, and the world-soul in turn produces the world of matter and change, into which individual souls are conceived as falling when they assume a mortal body.

In this material world, again, we find life showing itself in a descending scale which reaches down to plants and to inorganic things that have no life in them, and therefore no farther power of production. Yet even in relation to the inorganic also, Plotinus maintains the same contrast of matter and form; for he declares that in it, as in the higher degrees of reality, what first comes into being is something formless, and that this something receives a form by turning to that which has produced it. Only there is this difference, that what is produced in this lowest grade of being is no longer a kind of soul, but is lifeless and indefinite. In other words, what is produced at this stage is primarily pure matter, which becomes some kind of inorganic substance when it receives a form from that which is above it. Thus

matter in itself, according to the Aristotelian conception, is only a potentiality and cannot be conceived to exist by itself; but still it is viewed as a substratum for images received from above, from that which has a higher degree of reality. Even this formless matter, however, is explained by Plotinus as owing its existence to the infinity of the divine power which carries its radiation to the utmost verge of unreality. In this, Plotinus makes a change in the earlier dualism of Greece: for, while still maintaining the division of form and matter, he refers the matter as well as the form to the One, or, what is the same thing, to some kind of being that springs from the One. Still, subject to this change, we have in Plotinus, as in Plato and Aristotle, the conception of a form realising itself in a matter which is inadequate to it, an ideal principle determining something other than itself, and therefore failing to realise its own ideal nature.

The most important difference of Plotinus from the earlier idealists is, however, this, that he carries up the distinction of form and matter into the ideal world itself,[1] and thus is led to look for a higher principle of activity than even the intelligence; though the ideal matter of the intelligence is not conceived

[1] This ideal matter may have been suggested by the νοητὴ ὕλη of Aristotle. But Aristotle does not conceive *his* intelligible matter as entering into the objects of pure intuitive reason. Cf. Vol. I, p. 336.

as interfering with its unity in the same way that the matter of the sensible world interferes with the unity of that world. Even for this, however, he finds a verbal support in the language of Plato, who had spoken of the idea of Good as "beyond being" and "above knowledge." In so expressing himself, indeed, Plato did not mean to point to any transcendent unintelligible unity, except in the sense that the principle which is manifested in thought and reality alike, is beyond either taken abstractly. Still, we are obliged to admit that this last regress of Plotinus is only the legitimate result of the movement of thought by which, in Plato and Aristotle, the ideal world and the pure intelligence whose object it is, are separated from the phenomenal world in time and space, and even from the soul through which in that world the intelligence realises itself. For, if once we admit that the phenomenal world cannot be explained on purely ideal principles, and cannot therefore be apprehended in intuitive, but only in discursive thought, we must soon discover that even intuitive thought contains traces of difference and change, of a movement out of itself and a return into itself: and thus a further regress becomes necessary, in order to reach that pure identity in which alone, *ex hypothesi*, the mind can be satisfied. The fundamental error lies already in the first regress, namely, in regarding intuitive thought as capable of being separated from discursive

thought, or self-consciousness from the consciousness of the world in space and time; for, when once this error has been committed, the farther error, of seeking for the absolute unity in something that transcends even the distinction of self-consciousness, is a necessary consequence. And out of this, again, springs the whole system of subordination described above, in which Plotinus begins with the absolute One, proceeds from it to the pure intelligence, and ends with the *anima mundi* which, as the lowest grade of the intelligible world, has to discharge the function of connecting it with the phenomenal world in time and space.

It appears, then, that the fivefold hierarchy of Plotinus with the unknowable Absolute at the top, and the unknowable matter at the bottom of it—the one above and the other below knowledge—is the necessary consequence of the failure of Greek idealism to recognise that, in rising above the opposition of the pure intelligence and the consciousness of the world in space and time, what we are really seeking is not some ultimate abstraction in which all difference disappears, but rather a principle of unity which transcends and explains that difference. Such a principle is represented in the philosophy of Plotinus, as in that of Plato, by the *world-soul*. This, however, is regarded by them both, not as an expression of the essential unity between the ideal and the phenomenal worlds, but

simply as a kind of bridge to connect two terms which it is impossible really to unite. But no such bridge is needed, if the absolute principle of unity be regarded not as an abstract One, which is complete in itself apart from the world, but as a unity which realises itself in all the differences of that world. Or, to put the same thought in a theological way, the true solution of the difficulty is that God should be conceived not as the head of a hierarchy of powers by the lowest of which He is connected with the finite world, but as a self-manifesting Spirit which realises and reveals itself in nature and in man.

Now if this be true, it is just in the excessive recoil of the Neo-Platonist from the materialism of the Stoics, as in the excessive recoil of Plato and Aristotle from the materialism of their day, that we find the reason why the idealism of Greece remained imperfect and unfruitful. For, in turning away from the material world as incapable of being idealised, they practically raised matter into the place of an independent substance. This result Plotinus, no doubt, attempted to escape by treating matter in itself as purely negative or non-existent, and by reducing the material world to a semblance—an image of being cast upon the darkness of not-being. But this expedient only reproduces the original error in another form; for, inevitably and in spite of all his reluctance, he has to treat this purely negative

being as the positive cause of the corporeal conditions under which the soul realises itself in the world of sense, and of all the imperfection and evil which arise in that world. And, on the other hand, the ideal reality, just because it excludes such imperfection and evil, has to be regarded by him as something purely affirmative, which escapes all negation only by excluding all determination. In other words, it is reduced to an empty abstraction.

After what has been said, we may gather the peculiarities of the system of Plotinus under three heads: first, it develops to its extremest form the Greek dualism of form and matter, of the ideal and the sensible, of the pure and permanent unity of intelligence and the divided and changing world of sense: secondly, it thereby reduces the mediation between the two by the *anima mundi* into an external and therefore accidental connexion: and lastly, in consequence of the inadequacy of this mediation, it is obliged to seek its highest principle not in that soul, but in a transcendent Absolute, which has no connexion with anything but itself, although, *as* the highest principle, it must be conceived to be the first and the final cause of all things.

As to the first point, I have said that Plotinus develops to its extremest form the Platonic antagonism between the ideal and the phenomenal world, and this is true both as regards their content and

their form. As regards the *form*, it is noticeable that Plotinus devotes much attention to the question of the categories, and that he is the first to draw a broad distinction between the categories of the intelligible and those of the phenomenal world.[1] As to the categories of the intelligible world, Plotinus derives his list of them from the *Sophist*, where Plato discusses the relations of the ideas of being and not-being, identity and difference, permanence and motion.[2] Plotinus, however, makes two changes in the scheme of Plato. In the first place, he omits the category of 'not-being' as not properly applying to the intelligible world, and puts in its place, as the category contrasted with 'being,' the notion of 'thought' or 'intelligence' (*νοῦς*). In the second place, he takes the six categories not as separate conceptions but as correlated pairs of opposites which are essentially united to each other. The categories of the intelligible world are thus in reality only three in number, and they express respectively the *unity of identity and difference*, the *unity of permanence and motion*, and the

[1] The subject of the Categories is discussed by Plotinus in the first three books of the sixth *Ennead*, which really form a connected treatise. His views are explained and criticised with much insight and clearness by von Hartmann in his *Geschichte der Metaphysik*. See especially Vol. I, p. 135 *seq.*

[2] *στασις* and *κινησις*. Plotinus adopts the terminology of Plato by whom *κίνησις* is used in a general sense for all change or activity (see Vol. I, p. 213). Rest and motion in the proper sense are for Plotinus categories of the sensible world.

unity of intelligence and reality. They represent different aspects of that organic or super-organic nature which Plotinus attributes to the intelligible world, as a system in which the whole is present in every part, and in every part is conscious only of itself. Thus the pure intelligence is viewed as one with itself through all the differences of its objects, differences which, therefore, are no hindrance to its transparent unity. Again, its self-determined life combines rest with motion, or rather absolute permanence with unceasing activity, because it is an activity that never goes beyond itself. And this, finally, involves the complete relativity of the distinction between thought and reality; for the object, as intelligible, cannot be severed from the intelligence, nor can the self-consciousness of the intelligence be divorced from the consciousness of the intelligible world. By working out the unity of all these pairs of opposites Plotinus brings before us in the most forcible way that perfect interpenetration which he conceives as the essential characteristic of all the members or organs which partake in the unity of spiritual life. The perfect inwardness of intelligence in all its differences, as opposed to the reciprocal externality and exclusiveness of material objects, was never more vividly expressed. Here we have that idea of spirit by which St. Augustine was enabled to free himself from the materialistic conceptions of

his earlier Manichaeism; and he who would realise its extraordinary religious power has only to read the *Confessions*, in which St. Augustine constantly returns to the language of Plotinus whenever he has to speak of the all-pervading presence of God.

So much for the form of the intelligible world, but what of its content? The intelligence, Plotinus answers, contains all things in their ultimate ideas. It thus contains in itself a real difference and multiplicity, which yet, because of its ideal character, offers no hindrance to the unity of its life. We find in it all the manifold kinds of being, each showing its distinctive quality, yet maintaining such perfect relativity to the rest, that they all are seen to be organs in one great organism. This conception of the transparent unity or perfect interpenetration of the ideal forms that constitute the intelligible world is anticipated by Plato; but what is characteristic of Plotinus is that this world is regarded not merely as a system of ideas or forms or even such a system as related to one mind, but rather as a system of *minds*, all of them embraced and contained in one supreme mind.[1] The infinite Spirit is thus the living principle of an organic world of spirits, who 'live and move and have their being' in him: and while each of these spirits maintains its separate identity, they are all

[1] This was suggested by Plato, as we have seen (Vol. I. p. 217 *seq.*), but it is in Plotinus only that it is fully developed.

forms of the life of one great intelligence and, as such, each of them is transparent to all the others, knowing as he is known by an immediate intuitive vision. For, says Plotinus, "light is manifest to light."[1] It is as in Dante's heaven, where all the blessed read each others' thoughts in God without any need of words. In fact, the medieval conception of the hosts of angels and spirits of the redeemed, dwelling in a Paradise of pure light and harmony and enjoying the undisturbed vision of God,

> "In regions mild of calm and serene air,
> Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
> Which men call earth,"

is only a somewhat sensuous reproduction of the Neo-Platonic idea of the intelligible world. It is a conception of one life ever pouring itself into diverse organs, yet never giving rise to any collision or conflict, because the unity of each with all and of all with each is never for one moment lost or obscured. In all this, however, Plotinus is only working out the idea suggested by Aristotle's account of God as a purely contemplative being, in whom the highest activity, as it is purely an immanent activity and has for its object only itself, is at the same time perfect rest, an *ἐνέργεια ἀκινησίας*. The great difference is that Plotinus answers a question which Aristotle

[1] V, 8, 4. Cf. Whitaker, *The Neo-Platonists*, p. 63. See also p. 194, where the parallel conceptions of Dante are referred to.

leaves unanswered as to the relation of the pure intelligence in us to the divine self-consciousness, by making the life of God include and sustain the life of all the intelligences of which He is the centre; so that, instead of one solitary self-contemplative Being, we have a world of spirits.

The opposite counterpart of this pure unchanging heaven of intelligence is for Plotinus the material world, a world of beings which have no substantial permanence but are in perpetual flux from one mode of existence to another. For that which here takes the place of substance is matter, and that not the ideal matter of the higher world which gives rise only to differences that are transparent, but the baser matter which is ever in essential difference from itself and can never, except externally, be made one. This matter is conceived, indeed, in the first instance, as that which is purely receptive, which receives any image but retains none, a mere *substratum* in which one quality succeeds another without permanently determining it as this rather than that. As realised in such matter, the sensible world in a way repeats or imitates the spiritual world and has in it an image or semblance of each of its attributes. But the different aspects which in the intelligible world are in perfect unity with each other, become here separated and opposed. Thus a material body has a kind of unity through all its differences, but the unity is merely

the continuity of extended parts each of which is outside of the others, and the differences appear as disparate qualities which are not connected with each other by any necessary bond. It has motion and rest, but its rest is merely a certain limited resistance to extraneous influences and its motion is a change in which it ceases to be one with itself, and turns into a quite different kind of body. Thus while the ideal substance is complete in itself and has no activity except in relation to itself, the material substance is essentially incomplete and can only exist in acting on something else or being reacted on by it. Its being is a continual becoming, a continual striving after that which it is not, and its life is a process to death. Again, while the ideal substance is essentially one with itself and eternal, the material substance exists in time and space, is external to everything else and even to itself. It is, therefore, in continual conflict with itself as with other things and beings, continually destroying and being destroyed by them. Thus the sensible world is supposed to be an imperfect image of the intelligible world, and every characteristic of the latter is reflected in the former in a broken and distorted way. All these deficiencies are supposed to arise from the fact that the form of the sensible world is external to its matter, and that its matter is absolutely indeterminate in itself, and communicates its indeterminateness to the form which is impressed upon it.

It might seem, indeed, that the dispersion, separation, and opposition which thus overtake the ideal forms as realised in matter imply in matter itself a positive power of changing and corrupting the forms, which is inconsistent with the purely negative and passive nature attributed to it. But Plotinus prefers to think of these characteristics as arising from the incapacity of matter to hold the forms in their original unity. Because matter has no form of its own to hold it together, it lets the forms imposed on it fall asunder into local separation and qualitative opposition. Moreover, this incapacity or negative nature of matter makes it incapable of being known. Matter is in itself essential unreality and evil, and it can only be grasped by the intelligence in the same sense in which we can say that we see darkness, or as we dimly recognise an indefinite something as lying beneath all our determinations.[1] Our mind, indeed, shrinks from such an ἄπειρον, and feels a kind of *horror vacui* as it approaches it, as if it were drawn beyond the borders of being, and forced to contemplate absolute unreality and untruth. Yet we cannot escape, Plotinus holds, from the necessity of admitting its existence as the basis of sensible phenomena, as a mirror is necessary for the existence of images. And to it we are forced ultimately to attribute all change and decay, all evil and discord both

[1] I, 8, 4.

in the material world itself and in the souls of men, in so far as they are immersed in the darkness of such a world.

Plotinus thus develops to the utmost sharpness of antagonism the Platonic opposition of the ideal and the material worlds. But he also tries, as I have already indicated, to work out Plato's doctrine of the soul as the mediator or link of connexion between the two. The world-soul, according to Plotinus, belongs to the ideal world, but it has also to take the place of a *tertium quid* or middle term between the unity of the self-complete intelligence, and the dispersion and change of the sensible world. Let us consider how he describes this mediating function of the soul. "On the one hand," he declares, "there are existences which are essentially divisible and capable of endless dispersion. They are those in which no part is identical with another part or with the whole, and in which each part is necessarily less than the whole. Such are all sensible *quanta* that have corporeal mass; for each of them is confined to its own place, and none of them is capable of retaining its identity and yet occupying several places at once. Again, there is a substance which is entirely opposed in nature to those that have just been described, a substance which is undivided and admits of no division, and which is not capable even in thought of having its constituents separated from each other. This substance

cannot be circumscribed in place or contained in anything else, either in part or wholly; for it is, as it were, incumbent upon all things, not as being sustained thereby, but because other things cannot exist without it. Again, it is always identical with itself; and in relation to all other things it is like the centre of a circle from which all the radii extend to the circumference, leaving the centre to abide in itself and yet deriving from it their origin and existence. Thus, although the radii diverge from the centre, they ever maintain connexion with it; and although they are divisible, their beginning or principle lies in the indivisible."

"Now, between this substance which is altogether indivisible and occupies the first rank in the intelligible world and that sensible existence which is altogether divisible, there is a third nature which is not primarily divisible like material bodies, but which yet becomes divisible through its relation to them. Consequently, when such bodies are divided, the form which is immanent in them becomes divided also, yet in such a way that, while thus becoming manifold, it remains whole in all its parts, in spite of their separation from each other. We might illustrate this by the case of colours and other qualities and forms which communicate their whole being to many elements at the same time, yet so that each of them is affected in a different way; and which, therefore, must be

regarded as falling under the head of divisible things."

"We see, then, that in close connexion with that which is altogether indivisible, there is another nature which derives from it the character of indivisibility, but which, as it diverges from its original, is carried away towards the opposite extreme, and so comes to hold a mediating position between that which is indivisible and that which is corporeal and divisible. The illustration used above, however, is not altogether adequate; for the identity of this nature is not like that of a colour or any other quality which is repeated in many different extended objects; for in that case the quality in one of these objects is altogether cut off from the similar quality in another, just as extended objects are themselves separated. But such identity of quality cannot produce a real community or sympathy between the quite different things that partake in it; or, in other words, what we have in such a case is only a similarity of affections or modes and the substances remain different. But, on the other hand, the nature that comes next to the indivisible being, that is, the soul, maintains a permanent and substantial unity with itself, though it unites itself with bodies and so accidentally partakes in their division. Thus it is *divisible*, in so far as it animates every part of the bodies in which it is, and yet *indivisible*, because it is

whole in all of these bodies and in each of them severally."

"He who thus considers the greatness of the soul and its powers, will recognise how wonderful and divine it is, and to what a superior order of being it belongs: how, without having any extension, it is present in all extension, and how it occupies a place without being excluded from other places. Thus it is divided yet undivided, or rather it never really is or becomes divided; for it abides complete in itself, and is divided only in relation to bodies which, in virtue of their divisible nature, are not able to receive it indivisibly. Thus the division belongs really to the bodies, and cannot be attributed to the soul itself."[1]

The world-soul, then, appears to Plotinus as a *tertium quid* which connects the intelligible with the sensible world, though it is conceived as belonging to the former, and only in a secondary way acquiring the qualities of the latter, in so far as it has to manifest its powers through material bodies. Thus, it is out of space and time, and it acquires both spatial and temporal characteristics only as it acts on the material world, and maintains its constant cycle of change. Yet we have to remember, on the other hand, that the material world itself, and the matter which is its potentiality, are conceived as necessary products of the soul. In itself, the world-soul is all but iden-

[1] IV, 2, 1.

tified with the intelligence which it is conceived as continually contemplating; and its action upon the sensible world is not regarded as interfering with its purely ideal life. Further, just because it acts on the whole material world, and is not specially concerned with any particular part of it, the world-soul is free in its activity from all the opposition and conflict of that world; for there is nothing outside the universe which could destroy or in any way affect it. And even the particular souls which are included in the world-soul (just as all intelligences are included in the supreme intelligence), so long as they maintain their unity with the world-soul, are conceived as sharing in its own blessed life. At the same time, as particular souls, they are regarded as capable of falling away from it, and becoming bound up with special bodies, as Plato had already suggested in the *Phaedrus*; and then, though they cannot altogether lose their connexion with the soul of the whole, yet they become involved in all the vicissitudes of the body with which they have become identified. Their good seems to them to be one with the welfare of their particular bodies, and they are thus brought into conflict with other embodied souls which are filled with similar desires.

In this way the individuality of the particular souls seems to carry with it a possibility of evil, which becomes realised in so far as they are drawn

down into connexion with particular bodies, and so are caused to forget their own universal nature. And in this association even that universal nature, which they cannot entirely lose, becomes perverted; and their very innate love of the One and craving for union with it, turns into an insatiable greed and a gigantic selfishness which makes them seek to drag everything to themselves. On the other hand, looking at this process from the opposite side, the fall by which particular souls are brought into connexion with material bodies, is also the process whereby these bodies are drawn up into a higher existence than properly belongs to them, and become the organs of human, or animal, or, at the lowest, plant life. For Plotinus follows Plato in maintaining that all forms of life are ultimately identical. The higher principle of soul is in them all, and the distinction merely means that the particular soul has had a less or greater fall, and has sunk into less or more forgetfulness of its divine origin. But such forgetfulness is never final, and it is possible for every soul gradually to retrace the process of its descent, and to rise from the lowest to the highest stage of finite existence. Nay, it is possible for it finally to become delivered from the body altogether and to be restored to its unity with the universal soul, with the universal intelligence, and finally with the Absolute One itself.

It is at once obvious that in this view of the soul we have a concentration of all the difficulties of the system of Plotinus. The soul comes in, as with Plato, to reconnect the material with the spiritual worlds, which have been set in such antagonism that they cannot be directly united. But, if it is to bind the two worlds, it must have something of the nature of both. The possibility of such mediation, however, is itself inconsistent with the absolute opposition of the terms to be united, and the link of combination itself tends to break into two. For the soul, after all, belongs to the higher world; and even when, by the aid of the general principle that the higher form of being always produces a lower copy of itself, we have supposed it to give rise to a material universe upon which it impresses the likeness of its own unity, we need also the supposition of a fall of the particular souls, ere we can bring them into the material world or conceive them as identifying themselves with particular parts of it. And this fall has again itself to be explained by something defective in the nature of these particular souls, which made it impossible for them to maintain themselves in the intelligible world to which they originally belonged—a defect which it is altogether impossible to explain, if the intelligible world is as absolutely separated from the material world as Plotinus maintains it to be. Or, if we adopt the other alternative, and refer the defect

to a pre-existing matter which, if it exists, must be invaded by powers derived from the spiritual world, this only throws the difficulty a step farther back, and forces us to ask *why* matter itself must exist, and *why* perfection must produce imperfection. Why, if the One be complete in itself and perfect, need there be anything else besides the One? Or why, even supposing that the One must manifest itself in an intelligence and an intelligible world, must that intelligence go on to produce a lower manifestation of itself, which involves as a condition of its realisation the existence of matter—matter being essentially evil and producing evil in everything into which it enters as a constituent element?

The difficulty in which Plotinus is involved, as has already been indicated, was in itself insoluble; for it was impossible on his principles to discover any logical connexion between the material and intelligible worlds. He had insisted with such one-sided emphasis upon the opposition of these two terms that he was not able to discern the necessary relation that binds them to each other. The pure unity of the self-conscious intelligence is, indeed, as Plotinus saw, the opposite of the dispersion and self-externality of the world in space and time; but it is its opposite counterpart and cannot therefore in thought be separated from it. Hence they do not need any *tertium quid* to bring them into connexion with each

other. Or, putting it otherwise, their difference and relation involve that they are complementary elements in one whole, and the unity of that whole is the only *tertium quid* required. It is the usual expedient of dualism to try to bridge the gulf it has made by putting some intermediate nature between the opposites which cannot be directly brought together; but, if the gulf really exists, such a middle term will contain in itself both the contradictory elements and will need another middle term to combine them. The only possibility of mediation for such an antagonism is that the opposites should be recognised as essentially related, and, therefore, as the differentiation of a higher unity. On the other hand, if the opposites be not regarded as related, except externally and through an intermediary, a farther division and abstraction becomes necessary. If we have, on the one side, the pure unity of self-consciousness maintaining itself through the difference of subject and object, and, on the other side, the essential difference and self-externality of the material world in space and time; and if these two be not regarded as necessarily united, we are driven in both cases to explain the combination of unity and difference in both worlds by the matter in which the unity is realised. Nor does it make any essential distinction that, in the intelligible world, we have an ideal matter which produces only a transparent

difference, and in the sensible world a real matter which is capable only of an external synthesis.

The result of this failure of the mediation of the soul is that in the Plotinian scheme we have at the one extreme bare unity, and at the other bare difference, connected by a threefold mediation. In other words, just because Plotinus does not conceive the soul as the unity of the intelligence with the material world, but as a *tertium quid* that partakes of both, he is obliged on the one side to deny that the absolute unity is a unity of differences, or that it ever goes out of itself into the difference of self-consciousness; and he is obliged to deny, on the other side, that matter is ever really brought into subjection by the unifying principle in the material world. What he gives us, therefore, is a *subordination-system*, in which the attempt is made by many intermediates, to overcome the separation of absolute opposites, which cannot be brought into any intelligible relation with each other. And the assertion that the One is above, and matter is below existence and knowledge, only shows that the very idea of an intelligible world is destroyed by dualism, that is, by a theory which divides the world between absolute opposites and refuses to carry them back to any ultimate unity. Thus, to hold that there is, at the one extreme, a positive unity which is completely separated from difference, and which is not capable of being differentiated or determined

even by itself, although it is somehow regarded as the source of all the fulness and multiplicity of existence, and, at the other extreme, an essentially negative manifold which cannot be unified, and yet which is somehow externally brought under the unity of ideal forms, is to heap contradiction upon contradiction. Yet all this is not more than the necessary result of the first step towards dualism which was taken by Plato. And, what is still more important, all this is the necessary result of the logic of Mysticism, in so far as Mysticism with one of its voices refers all reality to God, and yet with the other represents the finite existence which is thus negated as somehow subsisting apart from God, even if it be only in order to deny itself. For Mysticism, as we have seen, differs from Pantheism in this, that it does not follow its negative movement to the end; and, just because it fails to do so, it is unable to get beyond its negations to a new positive. In its intense religious concentration it would seem to claim everything for God and leave nothing to his creatures; yet it never loses the consciousness of their independent reality in that of their relation to him. Or rather, perhaps, we should say, that it is so afraid of lowering the divine by connecting it with the finite, that it gives to the finite a kind of independent, though shadowy and illusory existence, which is separate from the divine.

This attitude of mind reaches its extreme expression, and, we might even say, its explanation, in the theory that all moral and natural evils are to be referred to something which in itself is purely negative and unreal, but which yet, as an element in the life of the creatures, turns into the positive opposite of God. Mysticism is a religious experience in which the feeling of God is at its maximum of intensity, an intensity which defeats itself, because it absolutely refuses to expand into a consciousness of God in the world. To it God seems to be at once nothing and all things: *nothing*, because He transcends every definite form of reality, and *all things*, because nothing can be apart from him. Thus every word which it utters has instantly to be retracted on account of its inadequacy. Some of the finest expressions of this attitude of the soul—in which it seems to itself to be ever alone with God without any world between, and is alternately attracted and annihilated by his presence—may be found in the *Confessions* of St. Augustine. But when St. Augustine expresses his deepest religious feelings, we find that he repeats the thoughts and almost the very words of Plotinus. Thus in that great passage in which Augustine gives an account of his last conversation with his mother, Monica, about the life of the redeemed in heaven, he tells us how at first their thoughts tried to climb by means of images derived from the

highest things in the natural world to some idea of the bliss of perfect union with God, and how, as they talked and expressed to each other their longing for it, they seemed for a moment "to reach out to it with the whole force of their hearts." And he tells us how, after this moment of ecstatic feeling, words came again, and they tried to express what they had felt; and what they said to themselves was this: "Suppose all the tumult of the flesh in us were hushed for ever, and all sensible images of earth and sea and air were put to silence: suppose the heavens were still, and even the soul spoke no words to itself, but passed beyond all thought of itself: suppose all dreams and revelations of imagination were hushed with every word and sign and everything that belongs to this transitory world: suppose they were all silenced—though, if they speak to one who hears, what they say is: 'We made not ourselves, but He made us who abides for ever'—yet suppose they only uttered this, and then were silent, when they had turned the ears of the hearer to Him who made them, leaving him to speak alone, not through them but through himself, so that we could hear his words, not through any tongue of flesh nor by the voice of an angel, nor in thunder, nor in any likeness that hides what it reveals; suppose, then, that the God whom through such manifestations we have learnt to love, were to be revealed

to us directly without any such mediation—just as, but now, we reached out of ourselves and touched by a flash of insight the eternal wisdom that abides above all; suppose, lastly, that this vision of God were to be prolonged for ever, and all other inferior modes of vision were to be taken away, so that this alone should ravish and absorb the beholder, and entrance him in mystic joy, and our life were for ever like the moment of clear insight and inspiration to which we rose—is not this just what is meant by the words 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?'"

How deeply Neo-Platonism must have sunk into the spirit of St. Augustine, when, in describing the highest moment of his religious experience, he adopts almost verbally the language in which Plotinus tries to depict the mystic ecstasy of the individual soul as it enters into communion with the soul of the world![1]

[1] V, 1, 2.

LECTURE TWENTY-FIFTH.

THE NATURE OF MAN AND HIS RELATION TO GOD.

The subordination-system of Plotinus described in the last lecture is closely connected with his view of man: for man is a microcosm in which all the grades of reality are repeated, as it were on a reduced scale. His nature reaches up to the Absolute, and down to the animal and the plant. His soul, bound up though it is with the existence, and occupied with the care, of a particular body, yet derives its life from a universal intelligence, which in its turn rests on the absolute unity. He is dependent on the sensations of his physical organism for the material of his thought, and he is therefore liable to be enslaved by the appetites of the animal, and even by obscure instincts that spring out of the nature he has in common with the plants: yet he is capable, like Plato's philosopher, of becoming a 'spectator of all time and existence,' and even of

rising beyond the life of intelligence into immediate contact with the divine. He is thus a sort of amphibious being who belongs to both worlds, and who therefore can climb up to the highest and sink to the lowest. His peculiar sphere, however, lies in the middle region between sense and intelligence, the region of discursive thought, which receives contributions from both.[1] By virtue of this discursive reason he, on the one hand, makes judgments and inferences, in which he distinguishes and connects the images derived from sense, while, on the other hand, he takes cognisance of ideas coming to him from above, from the pure intelligence; and he is able to recognise the agreement or disagreement of the former with the latter—a process which Plato called reminiscence. "Thus when sense apprehends the image of a man and supplies this image to discursive reason, discursive reason may simply accept the image for what it is: or if the individual has been formerly met with, it may ask itself 'Who is this?' and it may answer by the aid of memory that 'It is Socrates': or it may go on to evolve the content of the image and distinguish the different elements in it. Or, again, going beyond all this, it may raise the question whether Socrates is good, and then, though sense may furnish

[1] This view is closely connected with the ideas of Aristotle expressed in the *De Anima* (see Vol. I, p. 283 *seq.*). The first book of the first *Ennead* is almost a commentary on the *De Anima*.

the subject matter, or object of thought, it is from itself that the soul derives the criterion of goodness which it uses in its answer. And if it be asked whence it gets this criterion, we must say that it has in itself the form of good, and that the light of intelligence which shines upon it gives it the power of grasping such forms; for this part of the soul is pure, and therefore receives into itself the impressions of the intuitive reason. . . . It appears, then, that *we* are identified not with the intuitive, but with the discursive reason, while the products of the activity of the intuitive reason come to us from above and those of sense from beneath; and that which constitutes our self is the predominant part of the soul, which stands midway between the two powers, the higher and the lower, both of which we may call 'ours' but must not identify with our self."[1]

Yet, on the other hand, we have to remember that this identification of the self with the discursive reason merely represents the ordinary or average self-consciousness of man, in which he is not aware either of the heights or of the depths of his own being. Dwelling in this sphere of thought, man is conscious of himself as a particular individual in relation to, and distinction from other individuals who appear to be external to him and to each other; and his mind moves from one to another of these particular things

[1] V, 3, 3.

or beings, determining them severally, or in relation to each other, by the categories of the finite. As so conscious of himself in his finite individuality, man regards himself as one with a particular bodily organism; and he is immersed in cares for its preservation, so that it is hard for him to raise his eyes above the immediate concerns of his earthly life, or to realise that he has a higher nature than the things of sense to which his attention is directed. Hence he is unable to recognise that *they* are but appearances which come and go with the passing hour, while *he* has the roots of his being in that which is eternal. He is, as it were, imprisoned in his individual life, and subjected to the conditions of time and space, like the objects he perceives around him; and his love of himself takes the form of a desire to assert himself against all others, to prevail over them in the struggle for existence, and to gain for himself the greatest amount of satisfaction for his sensuous appetites or his earthly ambition.

Plotinus contends, however, that this narrow and limited existence is not due to the essential nature of the soul; it is the result of a fall from its original estate. Moreover, it is the act of the soul itself that has separated it from the universal life of reason and imprisoned it in mortality. In its self-will, it has sought to be something for itself; and it is just this self-seeking which has

confined it to a particular finite form of existence and identified it with an animal body, and thus shut it out from the universal or divine life in which there is no 'mine' and 'thine,' but everyone possesses the whole and is possessed by it. The soul has chosen the unrest of time in place of the peace of eternity; it has chosen spatial division and externality in place of that presence of all to all and in all which is the characteristic of the life of spirit. For "what," asks Plotinus, "has made the soul forget its divine Father? How is it that being of a divine nature and born of God, it has come to be ignorant of itself as well as of him? The beginning of evil was its audacious revolt, its fall into the region of becoming and difference, its desire to be something for itself. When it has once tasted of the pleasures of self-will, it makes large use of its power of determining itself as it pleases; and thus is carried so far away from the principle of its being that it loses all consciousness of its original. Such souls are like children torn away from their parents and brought up in a foreign country, till they have forgotten what they themselves are, and who are their parents. Thus seeing neither God nor themselves, they are degraded by ignorance of their kinship. They have learnt, indeed, to honour everything rather than themselves, to spend all wonder and reverence and

affection upon external things, and to break, so far as they can, all the ties that bound them to the divine. Their ignorance of God is bound up with their admiration of such things, and with their contempt for themselves. For he who pursues and admires that which is alien to himself, *ipso facto* confesses his own inferiority; and believing himself to be lower than the things of this world, he regards himself as the most degraded and transitory of all the creatures that come into being and pass away, and the thought of the nature and power of God is entirely banished from his mind."[1]

Our ordinary consciousness of self, then, is the consciousness of being one among many others, external to them as they are to us, and in constant rivalry with them for the limited satisfactions of appetite and ambition; but this is not a consciousness of the real self, and hence it is not a consciousness of God, who is, so to speak, the deepest ground of the self. It is the consciousness of one who in seeking to save his life has lost it, in seeking to be an independent self-sustained being has become divorced not only from God but from himself. But, according to Plotinus, this descent into finitude—this identification of the soul with a particular individuality, and with the bodily

[1] V, 1, 1.

organism, which is its expression—is never complete. In descending, the soul 'always leaves something of itself above.'[1]

In this way Plotinus expresses the idea that the universal nature of the soul is not extinguished, and that, however much it is forgotten, it is possible for us to become conscious of it again. For, after all, the discursive reason derives all the principles by the aid of which it judges and reasons, from the intuitive; and just in so far as we become conscious of these principles, we lift ourselves above the point of view of discursive reason. In other words, in grasping the principles that enable us to connect one thing with another, we grasp the unity which is presupposed in these principles. We thus realise that there is a unity of the intelligence with itself which is beyond the difference of subject and object, and for which that distinction, like all others, becomes transparent. In this unity of the intelligence, therefore, we now find our real self, and, in doing so, we detach ourselves from all the interests of the phenomenal world, even from the interest in our self as one particular object in it. This movement of thought is closely akin to that which we observed in the Stoic philosophy, with only the difference that Plotinus realised, as the Stoics did not, that the point of view thus reached is one which excludes

[1] IV, 8, 8.

all the activities of the practical life. For when the distinction of the subject and the object is transcended, nothing is left but the purely contemplative consciousness which Aristotle ascribed to God, and which in the *De Anima* he declared to be a consciousness of all things in their forms, *i.e.* in that ideal reality that is beyond all change.

"In this way," says Plotinus, "we and all that is ours are carried back into real Being. We rise to it, as that from which originally we sprang. We think intelligible objects and not merely their images or impressions, and in thinking them, we are identified with them. Thus we participate in true knowledge, being made one with its objects, not receiving them into ourselves, but rather being taken up into them. And the same is the case with the other souls as with our own. Hence, if we are in unity with the intelligence, we are in unity with each other, and so we are all one. When, on the other hand, we carry our view outside of the principle on which we depend, we lose consciousness of our unity and become like a number of faces which are turned outwards, though inwardly they are attached to one head. But if one of us, like one of these faces, could turn round either by his own effort or by the aid of Athene, he would behold at once God, himself and the whole. At first, indeed, he might not be able to see himself as one with the whole; but soon

he would find that there was no boundary he could fix for his separate self. He would, therefore, cease to draw lines of division between himself and the universe: and he would attain to the absolute whole, not by going forward to another place, but by abiding in that principle on which the whole universe is based."[1]

Plotinus, then, like Aristotle, regards discursive thought, which takes things in their separation and connects them externally with each other, as a limited and imperfect manifestation of the intelligence under the conditions of our finite existence. We cannot explain discursive reason, any more than we can explain intuitive reason, as a mere product or property of the bodily organism; but it is because a spiritual being is 'in the body' that he is obliged to think through images, and therefore to conceive things as externally related to each other in time and space. In like manner Plotinus thinks of all the impulses of our individual life, whether of *θυμός* or of *ἐπιθυμία*, as closely connected with our physical nature. When, therefore, we rise to the principle on which the discursive intelligence rests, when we become aware of the unity that underlies all our consciousness of particular things, even of our own particular existence, we are already beginning to emancipate ourselves from the body and from the limits of finite individuality that are

[1] VI, 5, 7.

connected therewith. We are rising into a region in which the barriers that divide us from objects, and especially from other beings like ourselves, are thrown down, and in which each intelligence, in knowing itself, at once and intuitively knows all things. We are making a regress upon the universal self, whose consciousness of self is in organic correlation with the consciousness of the not-self. We, therefore, transcend the difference of self and not-self, at least in the form in which that difference at first presents itself, as well as all the other differences that are subordinate to this. Further, as the intuitive unity of all things becomes consciously recognised, the discursive intelligence and its object, the world of time and space, gradually disappear from our view. We are raised into a world of pure light and harmony, into a region like the heaven of Dante, from which all darkness, confusion, and antagonism are excluded, because the whole is present in every part, and every part is transparent to all the others. We have thus found the reality of things in finding our true self, and the partial and distorted images of both which were due to their reflexion upon matter, vanish from our sight.

But, as we have seen, there is a still higher height which we may attain, and in which we may transcend even the transparent division of the intuitive self-consciousness. For as the discursive rests upon the intuitive intelligence, so the intuitive intelligence

rests upon an absolute unity, which maintains itself through all the assertion and negation of difference which are essential to self-consciousness; and of this unity we must become conscious, if we would truly know ourselves. Unfortunately in attempting thus to turn back on its own ultimate presupposition, the mind finds itself engaged in what seems a self-contradictory task; for, the very effort of thought to realise its own principle, separates it from that principle, and produces a new division, which seems incapable of being referred to the unity which it is trying to grasp. We thus appear to be repelled from the unity by the very effort we make to approach it; for we are seeking to reach an identity above all difference by means of an intelligence to which the difference of subject and object is essential. To reach that unity, therefore, we must transcend even self-consciousness, and become nothing in order that we may find all things in God. For, in this case also, Plotinus will not allow that we can attain to the higher, if we carry anything of the lower with us, and our intelligence must expire in the love with which it grasps its object. His words are these: "When the soul becomes intelligence it possesses and thinks the intelligible, but when it has intuition of God it abandons everything else. It is like a visitor introduced into a lordly dwelling, who for a while is content to gaze upon its varied beauties, but who forgets them all when the master of

the house presents himself; for the master, he finds, is no mere statue or ornament for a moment's wonder, but a presence that demands all attention for himself alone. Upon him, therefore, the visitor will steadfastly fix his eyes till, in the continuous intensity of his contemplation, he no longer sees the object he contemplates, but his vision becomes, as it were, incorporate therewith. Thus, what was at first a mere object of sight, becomes an inward seeing which shuts out even the memory of everything else he has ever seen. In order, however, to make the simile exact we must think of the master of the house not as a man, but as a God, and, again, we must think of this God as not merely appearing to the eyes of the visitor, but as filling his soul: for this alone will fitly illustrate the difference between that lower power of intelligence by which it contemplates what is in itself and that higher power by which, in a flash of intuition and inspiration, it grasps that which is beyond itself, first seeing it, and then becoming one with what it sees. And, while the former is the vision of an intelligence which still is in possession of itself, the latter is the intuition of an intelligence which is transported beyond itself by love. For it is just when it has drunk of this nectar which deprives it of understanding, that it is reduced by love to that simple unity of being which is the perfect satisfaction of our souls." [1]

[1] VI, 7, 35.

Observe further that, while Plotinus speaks of the soul divesting itself of all that divides it from God, even of thought, he does not hold that in doing so it is going out of itself to something strange or foreign; for God, in his view, is not 'far from any one of us,' but on the contrary, we truly come to ourselves only as we lose ourselves in him. "God," says Plotinus, "is external to nothing and to no one, but is present even with those who do not know him: though they escape out of him, or rather out of themselves, and, therefore, are not able to see him from whom they have exiled themselves. Having thus lost themselves, how can they find another being? A child who is frenzied and out of his mind will not know his father. But he who has learnt to know himself, will know also the Being from whom he comes."[1] Hence it is only needful to remove the division we have ourselves produced in order to be at one with God. In an earlier lecture, I quoted the passage of Plotinus where he compares men to a chorus, which, though it encircles the choragus, yet sings out of tune when it turns away from him and looks outward to other things, but which, when it turns to him, sings in perfect harmony because it makes him its centre. God is our centre, from whom to separate ourselves is to be in discord with ourselves and with all things; while to be in direct

[1] VI, 9, 7.

communion with him is to attain perfect harmony and peace with ourselves and with the universe. The result, then, is that the ascent of man, as Plotinus describes it, is not an ascent into some region from which he was at first entirely separated: it is his ascent into himself, into self-consciousness, and, finally, into a consciousness of, or rather a contact with God, as that unity of our being which is even deeper than the self.

On this we may remark, in the first place, that Plotinus clearly recognises the distinction between what is potential in man and what is actually realised in him; and, secondly, that in the main, though not entirely, this distinction coincides with the distinction between the unconscious and the conscious—between that which man is and that which he realises himself to be. Up to a certain point at least, what is actualised in man is what he is *for himself*; and when we speak of anything in him of which he is not conscious, we are pointing rather to what he may become, than to what he actually is. From this point of view, we cannot give him credit, or at least full credit, for anything that goes beyond his own view of himself, and of the world to which he is related. He *is* what he thinks himself, and thinks himself what he *is*. Hence Plotinus maintains that men, as men, are identified with the discursive reason and its products, meaning that in their ordinary consciousness they know them-

selves and others only as beings who are external to each other in space and changing in time; and that, therefore, if we regard their actual attainments in this stage, we must look upon them as beings who are limited to this kind of existence and this kind of consciousness. Yet Plotinus holds equally that they have in them, involved in this very consciousness, a higher potentiality, and that to realise *it*, they do not need to be transformed, but only to be developed. They do not need to go *out of* themselves, but rather, so to speak, *into* themselves, or, in other words, to become conscious of their own real nature. Or, rather, if we are to put it exactly as Plotinus puts it, the process is not a development of something new, but rather a recovery of what they have lost. Their rise to something better is a return to their native origin; it is deliverance from a yoke to which they have subjected themselves; it is the removal of an illusion which hides them from their own eyes.

On the other hand, while the way upward for man is the way to a deeper consciousness of himself than that which he at first possesses, there is open to him also a way downward which involves the gradual darkening and extinction of that consciousness of himself which, as man, he still retains. The soul, by indulgence in sensuous passions, may immerse itself more and more completely in the material body, till the light of discursive reason dies out into the

obscure sensations and instincts of the animal, and till even these are lost in the unconscious movements of the nutritive and reproductive life of the plant. For Plotinus—as against the view of Aristotle that each soul is relative to a particular organism—recurs to the Pythagorean or Platonic idea of transmigration. The soul, he argues, *is* everything potentially, and, therefore, can *become* anything. It can pass through all the grades of being from the lowest to the highest: it can ascend up to the absolute One, and it can descend till all consciousness, even in the form of sensitive feeling, is extinguished in it.

So far the ascent of man seems to be the development of a clearer self-consciousness, and his descent the obscuration of the self-consciousness he possesses. But this, in the view of Plotinus, holds good only within very narrow limits. For, in the first place, even the rise to what Plotinus describes as the purer self-consciousness of intelligence seems to involve the disappearance of self-consciousness in the ordinary sense of the word; since in the pure intuition of reason all memory and imagination, as well as all discourse of reason, are lost. The remembrance of the events of the earthly life of the individual and all circumstances attaching to his transitory individuality, must vanish from the consciousness that sees all things *sub specie aeternitatis*. Nor, indeed, can there remain in it any thought of the parti-

cular self as such. Hence the self of which the pure intelligence is conscious is simply the pure subjective unity of thought to which all objects are referred; and in this sphere objects are known only through the changeless ideas that are realised in them. The objects of such a pure intellectual consciousness are not the things of the immediate experience of the finite individual; and the self of which it is conscious in apprehending them is not the empirical self. Plotinus, indeed, asserts that in this pure consciousness the individuality of every particular intelligence is still preserved. But it is hard to see what this can mean. For, even at this stage the movement of ascent seems to be, not the rise to a higher self-consciousness—in which all that was present in the lower sphere is reasserted, though with a new light thrown upon it—but the recoil upon a simple intuition in which all that concerns the limited individual life is left out. It is a movement towards a more abstract, and not towards a fuller and more concrete, view of things.

And this holds still more obviously of the last movement of ascent to the immediate experience of the absolute One. Plotinus himself confesses that this, if it be in one sense a progress to a deeper experience, is yet a movement away from all definite consciousness either of the self or of its objects; and he even goes so far as to compare

the indefinable and indeterminate nature of matter which is below knowledge with the equally indefinable nature of the One which is above it. "As it is asserted of matter that it must have none of the qualities of things in itself, if it is to receive equally the impressions of them all, so and in a much more absolute way, must the soul become formless, if nothing is to hinder it from being filled and enlightened by the nature which is before all others."[1] Are we then to say that the whole process of spiritual ascent is not a movement to a more full and concrete consciousness of reality, but simply a movement of abstraction, in which, one after another, every feature of the world we know disappears till nothing is left? And is the "presence deeper than knowledge" in which it ends only another name for the disappearance of the soul and all its contents in the absolute unity?

On this point two things have to be said. The first is, that the religious man's realisation of the deepest truth often takes a form which might without much inaccuracy be described as a "presence deeper than knowledge," or at least deeper than *his* knowledge. In other words, in contrast with his ordinary dispersed and changing experience of finite things, the religious man has an immediate consciousness of a permanent power and presence of the divine, on which he rests, but which he is unable

[1] VI, 9, 7.

to measure. And when he tries to define what he experiences, expression seems to fail him. Sometimes, like a Hebrew prophet, he uses the highest images he can think of, only to declare their inadequacy; at other times he takes refuge in negatives to get rid of the apparent limitation of every affirmation. As in Dante's vision the whole universe was gathered round a central point in God, who yet at the same time was conceived as an infinite circumference embracing all things, so in the worshipper's heart God contains, and yet transcends, everything; and the double aspect of God as the One in whom all is lost, and yet the One in whom all is found, seems to be expressible only by asserting the failure of all expression. Thus what is really the deepest and fullest of all our experiences is apt to adopt the language of Agnosticism, in order to convey a meaning that seems too great for any form of words.

But, in the second place, we have to observe, that when the man who is thus inspired by "thoughts beyond the reaches of this soul," declares that he knows nothing, he means the very opposite of what he says. He does not mean that his mind is empty, but that it is too full; and his revolt against the idea of knowledge is caused by his realising a deeper unity, and so a greater completeness of being, than that which is consciously present to

him in what he ordinarily calls knowledge. He seems, therefore, to leave such knowledge behind him, as having no relation to the higher object that fills his soul. Nor does he realise that it is from the common consciousness of things and experience that he starts, and that his highest vision or intuitive feeling would have no meaning if it did not reflect back its light on the ordinary world of experience, and enable him, however imperfectly, to reconstitute his view of that world in accordance with "the pattern showed him in the Mount." For it is, after all, with materials derived from the world of sense that we must build up our New Jerusalem; and the Divine Being whom we oppose to everything else, would be a mere abstraction, if we did not somehow refer all that is finite to him.

If once this truth be realised, it comes to be seen that the religious movement upwards cannot be a mere movement of abstraction; and that, if it be in one aspect a *via negativa*, yet its negations always have a positive behind them. The defect of Mysticism, and especially of the Mysticism of Plotinus, is that it does not discern this; and that, therefore—if we follow out its characteristic way of thought to the logical result—it ends in a false isolation at once of the God worshipped and of the spirits that worship him. For the whole way upwards is described as one in which the spirit divests itself of

one element of its life after another in order to adapt itself to the nature of the object with which it seeks to be united. In this sense, Plotinus compares the true mystic to one who, before entering into a shrine, has to purify himself from all the defilements of the world, and even to strip off all his garments, that he may leave behind him whatever is unworthy of or alien to the god. So must man in his upward progress divest himself of everything finite, even of things which in the lower plane of finite life were good and useful. Thus practical morality is regarded by Plotinus as simply a process of purification (*κάθαρσις*), by which the body and its passions are got rid of; and when once the cleansing is complete, the ethical life with all its virtues is to be left behind. Thus the practical gives way to the contemplative life, which, as we have seen, is emptied of all reference to the experience of the individual in this world. And, finally, even the contemplative life itself has to make way for an ecstasy, in which the soul is stripped of everything except the bare feeling of the divine. The ultimate result is a religion which, just because it has substituted itself for all other interests, has ceased to be the consecration of all action and all knowledge, and which, in being set against both, loses all its value even as a religion.

From this it appears where the error of Plotinus lies. It lies, not in the regressive dialectic by which he

reaches higher and higher points of view, but in the fact that the higher point of view is taken at each regress to exclude the lower and not to enable us to correct the results won from it. It may give some additional force to this criticism, if we remark that the successive steps of the ascending movement of the thought of Plotinus have a close analogy to the stages in the development of the idealistic philosophy of Germany—an analogy which, however, conceals a profound difference of method. Thus both these movements begin in a perception of the defects of the ordinary consciousness, in so far as it conceives all objects as externally related to each other, and takes even the self as one particular object among others. And they both seek to correct this defect by calling attention to the universality of the self, to which in knowledge all objects are referred. When, therefore, Plotinus referred back the discursive to the intuitive reason, he was making the same kind of reflective regress upon the conditions of experience as that which was afterwards made by Kant when he brought to light what he called the *Transcendental Unity of Apperception*—when, in other words, he showed how the unity of the self is implied in all determination of objects as such. We may add that Kant made substantially the same mistake as Plotinus, when he regarded that relation of the world of experience to the self as showing that

the world of experience is merely phenomenal. For thus Kant was led to isolate the bare unity of thought with itself from the unity of experience which depends upon it, in the same way that Plotinus severs the intuitive from the discursive reason.

The true lesson, as was shown by Kant's idealistic successors, was simply that we must not view any object as complete in itself apart from the mind that knows it. Hence, as Fichte already contended, the world of experience—which we at first take as a world of independent individual things conditioned by time and space and acting externally upon each other, a world whose elements are bound to each other only by external necessity—must ultimately be regarded as an organic system, which is so essentially related to the intelligence that all its parts and changes are phases in the self-determined life of that intelligence. In like manner, if Plotinus were right in regarding the perfect unity of intuitive reason as the presupposition of even our discursive knowledge of the world of sense, the inference is that the idea of the former must be taken, not as excluding the idea of the latter, but as enabling us to reinterpret it. In other words, the spiritual world must be regarded, not as another world to which we ascend by leaving the natural world behind us, but as simply the natural world viewed in relation to its principle.

Lastly, the regress of Plotinus upon the One viewed as an absolute unity—transcending even the division of subject and object which is found in the pure intelligence—is very similar to the step which Schelling took when he rose above the subjective Absolute of Fichte's earlier philosophy. For as soon as it had been proved that there is a real correlation between subject and object so that the consciousness of each implies the other, it became necessary to conceive the unity, to which the world is referred, as transcending the opposition between them. And the analogy may be carried farther. For Schelling, at least in his earlier writings, seemed to regard that unity as a centre of indifference, an Absolute of which nothing could be said, though it is the source both of the ideal and the real world, both of spirit and nature. It, however, soon became visible to Hegel, if not to Schelling himself, that the unity cannot thus be separated from the difference which presupposes it, but that both the real and the ideal process must be reinterpreted from the higher point of view of that unity. In other words, the idea of God would lose all meaning, if He were taken as simply a unity transcending all finite and particular existence, and not as a Being who realises himself in the whole process of nature and spirit.

It thus appears that modern philosophy has retraced the ascending path of Plotinus, and indeed, of the whole

ancient philosophy which gathers to a climax in him. But the result is different, because in each step of this ascent the endeavour of modern philosophy has been, not to set the higher view of things in opposition to the lower, but rather to reconstitute the latter by means of the former. In other words, the ultimate tendency of modern philosophy has been not to separate spirit from nature, and God from both, but to see God as the principle from whom both come, of whom both in their difference and relation are the manifestation, and to whom through the whole process of their existence they return.

It appears, then, that the movement of Greek philosophy toward a deeper and deeper self-consciousness, ends, owing to the method of abstraction it follows, in the absolute negation of all consciousness. In other words, it is just because it separates the higher from the lower point of view instead of using the former to correct the latter, that, ultimately, it empties the higher point of view of all its positive meaning. For, when the intuitive unity of self-consciousness, with its ideal difference of the subject and the object self, is torn away from the discourse of reason with its external synthesis, and when the unity beyond the difference of self-consciousness in its turn is torn away even from *its* transparent difference, the ascent is made in such a way that the path of descent is absolutely barred. The πρῶτον ψεῦδος of this method may be already

detected in Aristotle's conception of the purely contemplative life of God from which all essential reference to the world was excluded. But, while Aristotle was content to take the world for granted, Plotinus was forced to face the difficulty of its origin. And, as we have seen, he could find no ground for the existence of anything other than God, except in the idea of a natural necessity by which the higher, though its activity is and can only be directed to itself, produces some lower copy of its own nature. But, in thus making the universe an accident, produced, indeed, by the divine, yet not because God is essentially self-manifesting, but only because it is somehow necessary, Plotinus practically revives the old Greek doctrine which puts fate above the gods. In other words, he escapes making matter independent of God, only to subject God to a natural law which is independent of himself. Thus Plotinus implicitly denies, what he seeks above all to affirm, that God is all in all, the source and end of all things.

And we must further note what is at least one of his motives for this denial. He is solicitous to guard against attributing deliberation or design to God in the creation of the world, because this would throw upon God the responsibility for all the evils and imperfections that are found in it. God creates because He cannot be and not create, and, therefore, the universe may be described as eternally begotten.

Moreover, when it is begotten, it is not God that seeks it, but it that seeks God; *κινεῖ ὡς ἐρώμενον*, as Aristotle had said.[1] Thus Plotinus involves himself in more than all the difficulties of the Aristotelian doctrine, which transfers the cause of motion from the object of love to the lover. Nor can the difficulty be removed by conceiving such love as a mere want, which is satisfied by the influence coming from its object. Love, indeed, is a want, but it is also a principle of activity that reaches beyond the want to its satisfaction; and the being in whom it is has a principle of movement in himself, and cannot be conceived as a mere matter for a form that comes from without. *A fortiori* the Being who is the ultimate source as well as the object of all love cannot be conceived as having no love in himself. Thus God must be regarded not simply as creating beings other than himself, but as realising *himself* in his creatures; for if not, their relation to him will be accidental and external, and He will not be *their* God. Thus the philosophy of Plotinus is the condemnation of the Greek dualism, just because it is he who carries it to its utmost point. It is the proof that we cannot so emphasise the *transcendence* of God in relation to his universe as to deny his

[1] In VI, 8, 15, Plotinus says, *ἐράσμιον καὶ ἔρως ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ αὐτοῦ ἔρως*, but in this passage he is avowedly using language which he admits to be not strictly accurate.

immanence therein, without ultimately being led to the absolute denial that He is *its God* at all. Or, to put the same truth in its particular application, we cannot deny that God is essentially related to man, without also denying that man is essentially related to God.

Now, it may, I think, be shown that the doctrine which finds the universe, and especially the doctrine which finds humanity, *in* God, was implicit in Christianity from the first, and that it found expression in the development of Christian doctrine. At the same time, as it was by the aid of Greek philosophy, and especially of Neo-Platonism, that that doctrine was developed, it was impossible that the dualism which was so deeply rooted in Greek philosophy should not greatly influence that development. And we find, as a matter of fact, that this was so, and that, as a consequence, the very doctrine of reconciliation became itself the parent of a new dualism which deeply affected Christianity all through the middle ages, and has not ceased to affect it down to the present day.

Into this, however, as it lies beyond our present subject, we cannot yet enter. But it may help to deepen our view of the difficulty if, in the next lecture, we examine the way in which Plotinus deals with the problem of evil, and how, in doing so, he and his followers were brought into collision with the Christian Church.

LECTURE TWENTY-SIXTH.

THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN PLOTINUS AND THE GNOSTICS.

THE period of the activity of Plotinus as a teacher at Rome lasts from 244 to 262 A.D., a period in which there was great activity of thought in the Church, and much controversy with the Gnostics and other heretics, who sought to introduce into its doctrine many elements borrowed from Eastern religion and Western philosophy. Nor can there be any doubt that Plotinus was brought into close contact with such speculations, and that he had to maintain his ground against them in the discussions of his school. The Neo-Platonist system was, as we have seen, the concentrated result of Greek philosophy, and its disciples were the natural representatives of the principles of that philosophy in the defensive war of ancient culture against the new ideas that were invading the world. The echo of these controversies is discernible not only in the one directly polemical work of Plotinus

against the Gnostics, but also in many of his later writings, particularly in his discourses upon Providence.[1] From these we can gather that Plotinus had to meet an attack upon his doctrines from two sides, both from those who represented a deeper Pessimism and from those who represented a higher Optimism than his own. And, indeed, these two attacks sometimes merged in one, in so far as the Gnostics, who carried the dualism of Greece to a form more extreme than Plotinus, at the same time maintained in a somewhat imperfect form, the Christian doctrine of the redemption of the lost and degraded.

It is curious to notice the intensity of passion with which Plotinus threw himself into the defence of both aspects of his own doctrine, and insisted upon the necessity of the exact compromise by which he attempted to reconcile them with each other. From the nature of the case, he had to maintain a balance between opposites. He had, to put it shortly, to prove that the world is relatively good, or rather that it is the best of all possible worlds, because the One, which is also the Good, is its source and its end. Yet, on the other hand, he had also to contend that, as a material world, it is evil and opposed to the divine, and that the great object and purpose of the moral and religious life is to escape from it. In the effort

[1] III, 1-3.

to maintain at once these two opposite positions, his philosophy is, as it were, torn asunder. We cannot say that he was ever shaken in the conviction of the truth of his own system; but there are passages in his later works which show how deeply he felt the stress of upholding it against its assailants. And while, even in these works, there are chapters full of the glow of passionate faith, yet I think it is true that, as his dialectic becomes more subtle and complicated, the movement of his thought becomes less spontaneous and less vividly imaginative. On the whole, it is in his earlier writings that we find the finest expressions of sublime religious enthusiasm. And the reason seems to be that his thought, through all the first period of his teaching, dwells mainly on the soul's ascent from grade to grade in the spiritual world, or, in other words, on the ways in which it may escape from matter and sense, and return into union with the divine. Love of beauty, dialectic, and the practice of moral virtue are described as different means by which it can purify itself and prepare for true final deliverance; and the various orders of being are represented as stages which the soul has to traverse on its upward way to God, in whom alone it can find rest and blessedness. The climax is found in the ninth book of the sixth *Ennead*, in which Plotinus devotes his highest powers of imaginative expression to describe the flight of the

'lonely soul,' the soul that has freed itself from all difference and finitude, to the 'lonely One,' *φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον*. It had not yet occurred to Plotinus to deal seriously with the difficulties which arise when we consider that all these lower stages of being, with all the evils they contain, must owe their existence to that divine or absolute Being, who alone is conceived as perfectly good.

Now these difficulties were first brought before Plotinus in an effective way by certain members of the Gnostic schools, who maintained that the sensible and material world was produced by an evil *Demiurgus* or Creator; that the spirits of men, in so far as they belong to that world, are subject to darkening and polluting influences; and, finally, that they, or rather the elect among them, are to be delivered from such influences by a Redeemer emanating from the higher spiritual world, who should descend into the world of sense to break the chains by which they are bound. Plotinus had made the world-soul the lowest grade in his Trinity of the spiritual world, and had treated it as the mediating principle through which the higher grades communicate with the world of sense and matter. But the idea that the material world is essentially evil, was abhorrent to him; and if he was obliged to admit—if, indeed, it were necessarily involved in his philosophical principles—that that world has evil in it, yet he is eager to maintain that

it is as good as it can be, and even that it is in essence good, and only accidentally evil. This world-despising mystic, therefore, when he encounters the coarser and more pronounced dualism of the Gnostics—which not only condemns the material as such, but gives over the present world to the evil one, and regards it as essentially the kingdom of Satan—remembers that he is a Greek, and that sensible beauty is for him, if not the perfect manifestation, yet the reflexion and product of a still higher ideal beauty. From this point of view, therefore, he is fain to glorify that very phenomenal world from which, in his mystic mood, he had turned away almost with loathing, as the best of all possible material worlds. As a material world, it is a 'shadow of good things, and not the perfect image of them'; but, at the worst, it provides the first stepping-stone from which, and by means of which, we can ascend to a higher order of being. Hence he is roused to anger against those who would destroy the fine balance of the Platonic spirit, in which the aspiring idealism that seeks to emancipate the intelligence from the bondage of sense is so perfectly poised against the artistic feeling that clings to the sensible, as the manifestation of the ideal. And he does not reflect that this fine balance has already been destroyed by his own mysticism.

Urged by such motives Plotinus, in his discourse against the Gnostics, endeavours to go as far in the

direction of Optimism as his general principles will allow him. This world is, indeed, he allows, only a reflexion or copy of the higher world, and, as a reflexion, it cannot be equal to its original; but it comes as near to that original as a reflexion can do. We are not to say that this world is evil, though there are many untoward things in it; it would be too much to expect that it should have all the perfection of the intelligible world. But, he asks, allowing that it is only an image, "what more beautiful image could there be? After the fire of the intelligible world, what better image of it could there be than our fire? What earth, outside of the intelligible earth, could be better than ours? After the self-centred unity of the intelligible world, what sphere could be more perfect or more regular in its revolution than the sphere of our heavens? Or, again, if we set aside the sun of the intelligible world, what other sun could shine more brightly than ours?"[1] That contempt of the world of sense, which the Gnostics regarded as a proof of the elevation of their spirits, is rather, Plotinus contends, a proof of the opposite; for he who despises the beauty he has seen, must be one in whom it does not awake the reminiscence of the higher beauty from which it is derived. "For what musician, who has perceived the harmony of the intelligible world, will

[1] II, 9, 4.

listen without emotion to the harmonies of sensible sound? Or what scientific man, who possesses the knowledge of geometry or arithmetic, will not rejoice to recognise the symmetry and proportion and order of the objects that are presented to his eyes? Even one who looks at a picture can hardly be said to see it, unless he recognises in it a visible imitation of ideal beauty, and unless it carries him out of himself and awakens a reminiscence of the truth it imitates. It is this reminiscence, indeed, which is the beginning of love. If, then, he who sees beauty well represented in the face of a man, be carried beyond it to the intelligible, can anyone be so inert and insensible of soul as to behold all the beauties of the material world with all its symmetry and order, and all the glory of form which shows itself in the heavenly bodies, far off as they are, and yet not to take all this to heart and reflect with reverence what they are, and from what original they come? He who can do so, hath truly beheld neither the one nor the other."[1]

Above all, the supposition that the general system of the world is evil, and that no good is to be found in it except in the souls of those men whom the Gnostic called spiritual, strikes Plotinus as an absolute inversion of the truth. To him, as an inheritor of the tradition of Plato and Aristotle, the principle

[1] II, 9, 16.

seems axiomatic that Providence looks to the whole rather than to the parts, and that the world-soul participates in good in a higher degree than the souls of individuals. In particular he holds to the peculiarly Greek idea (which Philosophy adopted from mythology), that the heavenly bodies, the sun and the stars, are in a special sense the organs of the divine, and are lifted by their perfect order and regularity of movement far above the change and contingency of the life of man. "It is absurd," he declares, "that they (*i.e.* the Gnostics), who have bodies like other men and are subject to sensuous desire, and to fear and anger, should form such a high idea of their own capacity, and should assert that *they* can attain to the intelligible, while they will not concede to the sun, which is far less exposed to passion and disorder and change, a greater wisdom than belongs to us men, who are the creatures of a day and who are kept back from the truth by so many illusions. Yet they assert that their own souls, yea, and the souls of the meanest of men, are immortal and divine, while the whole heaven and all its stars, composed as they are of nobler and purer elements, have no part in immortality; and this, though they see the perfect order and symmetry that prevails in the heavens, and the disorders of our earthly life. It is as if they supposed that the soul, which is immortal, of set purpose chose the worse place for itself, and

surrendered the better place to the souls of mortal men." [1]

The world of sense, then, is for Plotinus as good as it can be, and we see its goodness the more, the more we look to the whole or to those parts of it which, like the heavenly bodies, partake in its eternity, and the less we look to the changing lot of mortal creatures upon earth. Man occupies a middle rank and partakes at once of immortality and of mortality, and for him, therefore, we may expect a mingled and checkered life, corresponding to his double nature. Somewhere in the hierarchy of being there must be such a creature as man, and the defect of his nature

[1] II, 9, 5. We cannot say with certainty that these words were directed against Christianity, but no language could more clearly bring out the opposition between the spirit of intellectual aristocracy that still clings to Neo-Platonism and the levelling Universalism of the Christian faith, with its uncompromising claim of the highest for the most degraded of men. It reminds us of the striking passage in the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, in which he tells us what he found and what he did not find in Neo-Platonism, and how, therefore, he could attain no final satisfaction in it, but only in the Christian faith. He found in Neo-Platonism a conception of the spirituality of God, which freed him from the materialistic tendencies of his earlier Manichaeism; but he did not find in it that doctrine of the Word made flesh, which showed that all humanity is sacred, even in its utmost degradation, which humbled man with the sense of his unworthiness, yet at the same time revealed to him an infinite hope. *Ubi erat illa aedificans caritas a fundamento humilitatis, quod est Christus Jesus? . . . Non habuit illae paginae vultum pietatis hujus: lacrimas confessionis, sacrificium tuum, spiritum contribulatum, cor contritum et humiliatum, populi salutem, sponsem, civitatem, arrham spiritus sancti, poculum pretii nostri. Conf.* VII, ch. 20, 21.

shows itself in a weakness of will, which makes him incapable of sustaining himself in the intelligible world. Yet we are not to suppose that this original defect is a fixed limit to man's soul. He can by experience of evil learn to choose what is good, and the way upward as well as the way downward is open to him. As Plato said, "Virtue owns no control but its own," and by his conduct in one life man chooses the δαίμων that is to rule him in the next. We might be disposed to refer this idea of transmigration and of the possibility of an ultimate deliverance from the necessity of being born again into the world of sense, to influences derived from the East, and especially from India, where the doctrine prevails to this day; for we know that Plotinus accompanied the Emperor Gordian in his campaign in the East, and he might there have come into contact with some representatives of the Indian pantheism. But his language shows that he is merely developing the ideas of Plato.

Plotinus has several ways of explaining evil which seem to run into, or alternate with each other. In the first place, he refers it to the free choice of the individual. He is specially earnest in denouncing the idea of fate, in the sense of an external necessity which determines all individual things and beings. Indeed, he points out that such an idea, if universalised, is self-contradictory. "This necessity," he

declares, "by its very excess destroys itself and does away with the enchainment or continuous connexion of causes. For it would be absurd to say that our different members are fatally moved, because they are moved by the directing principle of our will—seeing it is not one thing that gives and another that receives the impulse, but there is one principle present in all our members determining them to move and be moved by each other. So, in like manner, if in the whole universe there be one principle which is common to that which acts and to that which is acted on, and the movement of one part cannot be referred to that of another, we should express the truth best by saying, not that all things happen through the causation of one by another, but that all things are one. On this hypothesis, then, we could not even say that we are ourselves, or that any action is ours, but all our counsels and resolves must be referred to the determination of another. In that case, to say that *we* act would be like saying that our feet kick, when we kick by means of them. We must, therefore, maintain for each individual his own individuality, and we must give to each the credit of his own acts and thoughts, whether they be good or bad. And especially we must not attribute our deeds to the whole, least of all our evil deeds."[1]

In this way Plotinus shows that a thorough-going

[1] III, 1, 4.

system of necessity is inconsistent with the attribution to the individual of an independent will or even of a self; for the idea of necessity presupposes relatively independent things or beings, one of which determines the other, but if the determination of one by the other is absolute, there will be no independent things or beings. We must, on that hypothesis, treat not only freewill but even self-consciousness as an illusion; for an ego or self can only exist on condition that we are entitled to refer actions and thoughts to it as apart from all other things or beings. And the same holds with all individuality, whether self-conscious or not. Fate, therefore, is a self-contradictory conception; for if the principle of the whole never gives, nor can give, an independent individuality to the parts, it cannot of course take it away. This, no doubt, is an important thought, and the consideration of it may suggest an answer to an objection commonly brought against the idea of freedom. It is often said that, if we regard the universe as a whole and refer it to one principle, which, as the principle of the whole, must be absolute and infinite, we cannot admit anything like freedom or independence in any of the parts. But to this it may be answered that, if we adopt such an argument, we are really limiting that very principle, which at the same time we are declaring to be absolute and infinite; in other words, we are maintaining that an

infinite Being cannot go beyond itself or give rise to any creature even relatively independent of itself. Thus we seem to be driven to the conclusion that, if there be any ultimate unity at all, it must be a Pantheistic unity, in which all difference is so completely lost that even the illusive appearance of it becomes inexplicable. In the language of Plotinus, the doctrine of necessity carried to the extreme contains the negation of itself; for the many existences, which are connected by links of necessity, must collapse into one, and to say that the one Being who includes all is necessary, has no meaning.

So far, the argument of Plotinus is irresistible; but how does he himself escape the difficulty? He also holds that the Absolute One does not go beyond itself, and that its activity, so far as we can ascribe to it activity, is directed only to itself. He holds, to put it broadly, that *it* is not responsible for the existence of those lower forms of being, which nevertheless must be allowed to spring from it, and to owe their existence to it. But how then can they exist at all, if the Absolute does not realise itself in them? Plotinus, as we have seen, is obliged to fall back on the strange supposition of an action of the Absolute which is accidental, or has only an external necessity. The inexplicable law that the higher form of being always produces a lower form, though without any action directed to the lower, is used by Plotinus at

once to account for the existence of the lower, and yet to save the higher from any responsibility for it. Hence we have a descending scale of degrees of reality, each of which produces the imperfect image of itself in that which follows it, till ultimately we are carried beyond the intelligible world into the region of matter, in which defect turns into physical and moral evil. Thus God is saved from being the cause of evil by a twofold expedient: first, by the interposition of a number of intermediate beings between the highest and the lowest; and secondly, by the idea that the production of the lower is an accidental result, and not the aim or object of the activity of the higher.

But it is obvious that this is no satisfactory solution of the difficulty. For, in the first place, the very idea of an accidental operation of the Absolute is self-contradictory, as it implies that the Absolute in its outgoing activity is subjected to a law which is not involved in its own nature as absolute. And, in the second place, the interposition of the pure intelligence and the world-soul between the absolute One and the region of matter, only distributes the problem of evil over the different grades of reality, without doing anything towards the solution of it. Plotinus, indeed, seems to maintain that, though the intelligence and the world-soul are defective as compared with the

One, yet there is, strictly speaking, no evil, till we reach the material world. But this contradicts the doctrine of Plotinus himself, that evil lies essentially in defect, in the negative as such. It also contradicts another of his doctrines, according to which the reason for the descent of an individual soul into the material world must lie in something defective in its nature as a soul, or even as an intelligence. For, as we have seen, Plotinus repeatedly refers this fall to the self-will of the soul, which withdraws itself from the whole, and seeks to be something for itself. In one passage, indeed, he seems to find a reason for the fall in the need of the soul to learn by experience of evil that 'good is best.'[1] But this, again, would imply that the soul in the intelligible world is a mere possibility or potentiality, and that it requires to pass through the trial and discipline of this world, in order to become developed. Such a conception, however, involving, as it does, that existence in the material world may itself be regarded as a necessary stage in the development of the spirit,

[1] In IV, 8, 5, Plotinus says that "if the soul soon escapes from the world of sense, it has suffered no loss by entering it, but, on the contrary, has gained the knowledge of evil, and learned to recognise its essential nature; it has become conscious of its own powers and manifested them in action, powers which would never have come into exercise if it had remained in the intelligible world. Thus the soul could never have known its own possessions; for only the actual exercise shows the capacity, which would otherwise remain unknown, and could not even be said to exist in any true sense."

would necessitate, if it were worked out to its consequences, a complete transformation of the whole view of Plotinus as to the relation of the two worlds. Finally, when Plotinus refers all evil to matter, he makes it inexplicable how the soul should ever descend or enter into connexion with matter; or how, if by some external necessity it does so descend, the responsibility for the evils to which that fall gives rise, should ever attach to the soul itself.

In his discourses upon Providence, the principal aim of which is to maintain that God is not responsible for evil, Plotinus adopts another and a more promising line of argument. He compares the course of the world to a drama in which there is much conflict between the *dramatis personae*, yet in which such conflict is always subordinated to the unity of the whole. And, in connexion with this metaphor, he goes on to maintain that the nature of the universe will be more rational and perfect if it allows room, not only for difference, but also for antagonism between its separate parts; indeed, he even seems to suggest the idea that the highest unity is that which admits and overcomes the greatest antagonisms within itself. Now in the intelligible world there is a perfect organic unity overcoming all its difference; but in the world of sense, which is its copy, this difference changes into a conflict of opposites which can never be completely overcome or reconciled;

and in this world, therefore, the parts are continually warring against each other and even destroying each other. Here, then, we have a continual process of generation and decay, a mixture of good and evil which cannot either be separated or reconciled. Yet, through all this checkered existence a certain providential order is maintained in the rise and fall of individuals and the interchange of existence. Thus, though evil exists in the world, it is continually subordinated to good. Justice is ever being done, in so far as it is the character of individuals that determines their fate; and the movement of the whole system is an imitation on a lower plane of the perfectly organic constitution and process of the intelligible world. And if it be objected that in this world we often see the wicked triumphing and the good depressed, Plotinus bids us remember that suffering and death are little things to an immortal being. The conflicts and wars of the phenomenal world, we are to consider, are after all rather a dramatic exhibition than a real battle; and the *dramatis personae* who have been slain on the stage, as soon as the curtain is down, rise up to begin a new play, in which the parts are distributed anew, according to the goodness or badness of their acting in the first piece.

"A rich life," says Plotinus, "manifests itself in the universe, which creates all beings, giving manifold

variety to their existence, and unceasingly producing beautiful forms to be, as it were, its living playthings. And when we contemplate the battles of mortal men and the weapons they use when, ranked in graceful order, they fight against each other, it appears to us like a Pyrrhic dance; and it suggests to our minds the thought that the serious business of mankind is nothing but play, and that death is not at all to be feared; for, after all, those who die in battle only anticipate by a short time that which would happen to them in age, and those who depart soonest from the earth will the sooner come back. Again, if men be deprived of their property, they may easily compute with themselves that it was not really their own beforehand, and that the robbers have gained no serious possession in that of which they will soon themselves be robbed; for, we may even say, to keep *such* goods is worse than to lose them. We must, then, regard all that befals us like actions upon a stage, and we must consider that the murders, the various kinds of death, the conquest and plundering of cities, are but changes of scene and character, and theatrical imitations of tears and lamentation. For here, as in all the vicissitudes of life, it is not the inner soul but the outward shadow of humanity which laments and complains and bewails itself when, with the whole earth as stage, men make their manifold exits and entrances. Such, indeed, are the doings of

those who understand only how to live the lower and outer life, and have not discovered that all its sorrows, and even its most serious interests, are only play. For none but the man who knows the real earnest of life is called upon to be in earnest; while play is seriously treated only by those who do not know what earnest means, and who are themselves but playthings. But if a really earnest man takes part with them in the game and undergoes the vicissitudes which they undergo, he will know that he has lighted upon the plays of children and will take off his mask. Even a Socrates may play, but he plays only with the external Socrates. We should, therefore, keep in mind that weeping and lamentation are not to be taken as proofs of the presence of real evils; for children also weep and lament when no ill has befallen them."[1]

In this attempt to explain, or explain away, evil, we see Plotinus wavering between a justification of it as a necessary means to a greater good, and the denial of its reality except as a transient appearance of the phenomenal world; and it is obviously just because he is not able to carry out the former principle successfully, that he is obliged to resort to the latter. The idea that the highest unity is that which manifests itself in the greatest differences and antagonisms and overcomes them, is, as we have seen,

[1] III, 2, 15.

suggested by Plotinus; but in his view of the sensible world he practically gives it up. Yet it really contains the solution of many of his difficulties. For it carries with it the consequence that the Absolute must be conceived, not as excluding, but as including, all differences and oppositions. If we adopt this principle, however, we must regard the Absolute not as an abstract unity, but as a unity in which all difference is embraced. We must raise the pure intelligence above the One to which Plotinus subordinates it, while conceiving it with Plotinus as a conscious self, a self whose self-consciousness implies and includes the consciousness of the intelligible world. Farther, we must conceive the intelligible world, not as a world of pure forms or abstract intelligences, but as simply the external world under all the conditions of time and space; and we must recognise this world of externality and of change, as the opposite counterpart, and therefore as the necessary correlate, of the pure unity and transparent difference of self-consciousness. Finally, we must represent this divided and finite world as yet a world in which spiritual life is realised, not in one but in many spirits who, in spite of their finitude and change, or by means of it, are having developed in them the same principle of self-consciousness in which the whole system finds its beginning. For the idea that the highest unity is the unity of the greatest differences

leads, not only to the conception of that unity as spiritual, but also to the conclusion that God can realise himself only in a kingdom of spirits, to whom he has given the same independent selfhood which constitutes his own nature; for

> "God is chiefly God by going forth
> To an individualism of the infinite
> Eterne, profuse, intense." [1]

If it be true that the Absolute is not a self-contained, but a self-manifesting spirit, He must also be a Father of spirits. In the striking words of Schelling, He can only give *himself* to his creatures as he gives a *self* to them, and with it the capacity of participating in his own life. On such a view, his infinity will not be, as Pantheism would make it, the negation of their independent life, but the very reason and source of its freedom.

Now it is a stroke of insight on the part of Plotinus to discern that spiritual life, at least in creatures who are under the conditions of the sensible world, must itself become the source of greater division and strife than could exist among creatures who do not partake in reason, a division and strife which rise even to internecine war. Thus, after stating that "the reason of the world, in order to be perfect, must produce in itself not only difference, but contrariety," he goes on to say that, if reason

[1] I cannot find the reference for this quotation.

has this character in itself it will show it still more in its products, in so far as these are further separated from each other. "Now the sensible world has less unity with itself than that higher world which is its reason or principle Consequently, it is more manifold and admits greater antagonism in the members of it. Hence also their desire to maintain their own life, and their impulse to compel all things into unity with themselves, is greater; and, in the egoistic effort to seek their own good, by their very love they destroy the objects of their love, when these are perishable; for the part, in its endeavour to attain the whole, drags to itself all that it can. Thus the good and the evil are thrown into opposition, as when the same art of dancing compels the many members of a chorus to make opposite and contrasted movements; for, though we call one part good and the other bad, yet the combination must be pronounced excellent. It might, indeed, be objected that this way of looking at the matter involves that there is no badness at all; but the answer is that it does not involve the denial of the badness of individuals, but only that their badness is to be attributed to any one but themselves."[1]

Plotinus, then, goes on to show how the divine Being may give to the evil and the good their appropriate parts in the drama of existence, according

[1] III, 2, 67.

to the characters which may have so far developed in themselves; and how their playing of these parts may be itself a further step in the evolution of their characters, which will be rewarded in their next incarnation, as actors who play their part well may receive a higher rôle in the next piece, and those who play it ill may be degraded. The doctrine of transmigration is thus used as a means of escape from some of the difficulties connected with the imperfect evolution of individual character in the short life of man.

The doctrine thus stated is not without ambiguity, but it seems to contain a principle which would go farther to explain the origin and limit of evil than the theory which Plotinus generally advocates. For what on that theory Plotinus seeks is to free all the powers of the intelligible world (to which on different grounds he gives the name of God) from responsibility for evil, simply by denying that their activity is primarily directed to the sensible world, which nevertheless they produce. In the passage just quoted, however, it seems to be suggested that the highest unity *must* realise itself in the extremest division;[1] from which it would follow that God cannot be a mere self-contemplative reason, but must be regarded as realising himself in a world of spirits who, as

[1] Of course, Plotinus saves his consistency, in appearance at least, by taking the greater division of the sensible world for granted.

such, are conscious of a universal life, a life which is centred in itself. Evil may thus be explained as springing from good and from God, in so far as it arises from the conditions of the development of finite spirits in whom the germ of a divine life is implanted. For, as possessing such a life, they must be independent, not only in relation to men, but even in a sense in relation to God.

Further, as Plotinus points out, this selfhood of finite spirits shows itself at first in the greatness of their claims, in what Hobbes calls their "natural right to all things" that sets them in rivalry and antagonism to each other. For, as Carlyle often reminds us, a self-conscious being is one who cannot be satisfied unless he has the universe to himself; and yet actually he is at the same time but one individual, an insignificant part of this partial world, and he necessarily comes into internecine conflict with others, so soon as he attempts to realise the claim which his selfhood makes him set up. This enormous contrast of actuality and possibility, of individuality and universality, of a narrowly limited existence under conditions of time and space and an infinite want claiming to be satisfied, is the essential problem of human life, the problem which finds expression in the writings of Marcus Aurelius and St. Augustine, of Pascal and Rousseau, in all the writers who have penetrated deeply into the secrets of the

inner life. It is the same antithesis which is involved in the Platonic doctrine that man always seeks the absolute good and can be satisfied with nothing less: from which it seems to follow that his actual life as an individual can bring to him nothing but a series of disappointments. For if he seeks an absolute good in anything finite, he must be disappointed; yet at first there seems to be nothing else in which he can seek it. The source of his evil, therefore, is his ignorance of that which he is seeking. And if it be asked how he can be seeking what he does not know, the answer is that what he seeks is a complete satisfaction of the self, and that he has not yet learnt that the self must be lost ere it can be saved. He cannot be satisfied with anything short of the life of God, but he has not yet discovered that the life of God is a life of giving and not of taking, and that he who would participate in it must accept its principle. Yet even in this his independence is maintained; for, as he is a self, he must learn from his own experience to accept that principle, and no power can make him accept it, except as the result of his own life and experience.

Now, if this view be true, the difficulties as to evil which beset Plotinus lose at least a part of their force. For, in the first place, evil, as a subjective experience, cannot be absolute, cannot be other than the perversion or imperfect development of a nature which is rooted in good. It can be nothing but the seeking of

the finite as if it were infinite; and its fundamental characteristic must be ignorance—the self-contradiction of a being who knows not what he really is, and, therefore, seeks his good where it is not to be found. On the other hand, as an objective fact, evil can exist only as the collision of individual selves who by such self-ignorance are brought into conflict with each other. We only hesitate to call it ignorance, and to generalise the saying of Christ that those who do evil 'know not what they do,' because the term ignorance rather suggests the absence of some particular piece of knowledge, and not the whole attitude of a self-conscious being towards himself and towards others. Further, we have to observe that the conflict of self-conscious beings with each other, which includes almost everything we call evil, is itself part of the discipline by which the selfishness and self-will that causes it may be overcome. For it is only through the experience of the evil of self-seeking in oneself and others, that a clear consciousness of the good to be found in self-surrender can be developed.

From this point of view, the error of Plotinus is that he *does* practically admit the existence of absolute evil, that is to say, of a matter that cannot in any way be made a means to good. But, in a passage already quoted, he partly corrects this error when he refers the fall not to matter but to egoism, to the wish of finite spirits to be something for

themselves; and when he explains this egoism as itself a result of that desire for the good which, when it becomes developed and enlightened, is turned into the love of God. In this he shows a true insight into the fact that evil is a self-contradictory state of the will of a rational being. The correlative truth would be, that such a will does not need to be rooted out, but only to be brought into harmony with itself; for the change from selfishness to love is not the extinction of the self, but rather the opening up of the way to its true realisation. Plotinus, however, is too deeply imbued with the conception of evil as a purely negative element, introduced into the soul by its connexion with the body, to adopt any view of the process of its purification and conversion to good, except that it is an escape from this defiling contact. He is unable, therefore, to work out the consequences of his alternative idea of evil as consisting in self-will and self-seeking. And, though he protests against the Gnostic conception of the world as evil, and as the creation of an evil *Demiurgus*, he cannot get rid of the dualistic assumption which is at the bottom of that conception. All we can say for him is, that he gives us the means of correcting the defects of his own view, when he suggests that the highest unity is that which overcomes and reconciles the greatest antagonism; when he recognises that this greatest of antagonisms is to be found in the conflict of self-

conscious beings with each other; and above all, when he shows that this antagonism, though in itself the very essence of evil, arises from the fact that, as self-conscious, they must seek the highest good for themselves.

Turning to the other main difficulty of the subject, the difficulty either of referring or of not referring the origin of evil to God, who is the principle of all things, we see that Plotinus adopted a very lame solution of it, when he regarded matter as the utmost result of the *transeunt* activity of the One, as an effect of its overpowering energy, which yet has no connexion with its inner nature. It was the last refuge of Greek Dualism to think of the Absolute as subjected to a foreign necessity. And this Plotinus at times is near admitting when he maintains with Plato the absence of envy in God; when he speaks of the creative activity as, for that reason, essential to God and even of the sensible world as a manifestation of him; and above all when he declares that the descent of the soul of man into this world is necessary to its own spiritual development. If, indeed, we reject the false opposition of an *immanent* and a *transeunt* operation of God, and conceive of him as essentially self-manifesting, and as capable of fully manifesting himself only in and to spiritual beings to whom he imparts the principle of his own life, we can see our way to the solution of the difficulty which Plotinus is seeking. In other

words, we can see how the divine Being may be regarded as the principle or first cause of all his creatures and yet not in the strict sense the cause of evil as such. For, if the root of evil lies in the self-will of creatures, who, in seeking themselves, divorce themselves from the life of God and become the rivals and enemies of each other, yet, on the other hand, such self-will is a necessary element in the inchoate consciousness of self, and it is only by passing through it and overcoming it that the consciousness of a self which is at one with man and with God can be developed. A self-conscious being cannot possibly be, or become, good by the determination of another; and in this sense we may say that it is impossible even for God to create a good spirit, a spirit which is good apart from its own will, or good except by the overcoming of evil within and without it. For the very consciousness of self carries with it the assertion of self and the seeking of self; and in a finite being such self-assertion and self-seeking have in them the germ of all that is evil. Such a being has by its own experience to discover that it can be one with itself only as it is one with God, and it must discover this *for itself*. From this point of view we can say that evil is essentially involved in the existence of finite spirits, and that even divine power could not prevent it, if God was to be the Father of spirits who could share in his own life. For a spiritual kingdom is necessarily

a kingdom of freedom, and this means a kingdom of those who have realised for themselves their membership in it. Thus it may be seen that the Christian idea of God as self-revealing suggests, or contains implicitly in it, the solution of the problem which Plotinus vainly endeavoured to solve by distinguishing the *immanent* from the *transeunt* or outgoing operation of the Divine Being.

This idea, however, was at first only implicitly contained in Christianity, and its full evolution is to be found only in the history of the development of Christian doctrine and of the philosophy which arose out of it.

LECTURE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

THE INFLUENCE OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY UPON CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

In the last lecture we were dealing with the Neo-Platonic treatment of the critical question as to the nature of evil and its relation to the absolute Being who is called *par excellence* the Good. In arguing this question against the Gnostics, and perhaps against the Christians, Plotinus is brought into considerable difficulties, because he has to face those who from one point of view are greater pessimists, and from another point of view greater optimists than himself. On the one hand, the Christian Church had inherited the Jewish antagonism to all nature-worship, and even something of those darker views which the Jews had derived from Persia, according to which this present world was regarded as given over, for a time at least, to Satan and the powers of evil. And this way of thinking was exaggerated by some of the Gnostics—and obviously by those with whom

Plotinus was brought into contact—into the belief that the world was created by an evil *Demiurgus*. In these Gnostics, indeed, the dualistic or pessimistic tendency was carried to an extreme by a combination of eastern with western elements, of the Jewish belief in demoniac possession with the Greek abhorrence of matter. Even the Christian church, though it rejected Gnostic extravagancies, was in the time of Plotinus becoming every day more ascetic and less inclined to regard this world as anything but a place in which to prepare for the next. As against such antagonists, Plotinus, in spite of the ascetic and mystic tendencies of his own philosophy, was constrained to maintain the Platonic view of natural beauty as a stepping-stone to the higher beauty of the intelligible world: and, inheriting the traditions of a religion and philosophy which had treated the heavenly bodies as of a diviner nature than men or any of the other creatures of the phenomenal world, he was particularly scandalised at the idea that the former should be regarded as the work of an evil power. For him, this world, though in a sense a world of shadow and semblance, was an image or copy of the intelligible world; and from this point of view he was obliged to palliate its evils, and to treat its existence as a good and its defects as merely the necessary drawbacks that go along with that good.

On the other hand, in Christianity and even in

Gnosticism, there were elements of a deeper optimism, which were equally obnoxious to Plotinus. For apparently, in spite of their dualism, some Christian ideas as to a 'new earth' and a bodily resurrection of the blessed had appeared in the Gnostic writings; and these were at once rejected by Plotinus as conflicting with his conception that perfect bliss is to be found, not in any change of the material world, but in a complete escape from it. And with still more decision did he repudiate the doctrine that humanity is in itself divine, and that the highest good can be attained even by the commonest of men without ceasing to be human. The idea that union with the supreme God is for the élite of humanity, and that it can be realised only by the way of philosophic contemplation, makes him revolt against the universalism of Christianity.

Christianity then, as I have indicated, contained at once a deeper pessimism and a higher optimism than is to be found in the system of Plotinus, and just because of this, it could admit no dualism nor any of the compromises that dualism necessarily brings with it. Realising, as Plotinus on the whole refused to do, that the seat of evil is in the consciousness and will of the rational being as such, Christianity could be content with nothing less than its complete eradication; nor could it admit that there was anything in the world or in humanity that was

essentially evil, or in which good could not be realised. It was a doctrine of conversion, redemption, regeneration, reconciliation: and it could not without inconsistency allow that there was anything outside of the circle of the divine life, least of all any human being, who, as such, must be made in the image of God. Yet as little was it inclined to minimise the actual facts of the division of men from God and from each other. In recognising evil as rooted in consciousness and will, it deepened very greatly the conception of its antagonism to good, at the same time that it made it possible that that antagonism should be completely overcome. What is more, it made even the existence of evil explicable, as a necessary step in the development of the finite spirit to a consciousness of the divine principle which is realising itself in and through its finitude.

When, however, we say that all this was implicit in Christianity, we must make a distinction. It was clear from the beginning that Christianity involved a new conception of the relation of God and man, but this conception was at first an undeveloped germ, a germ of which the whole history of thought from that time has been the development. Presented at once as a doctrine embodied in an individual life, Christianity seemed from the beginning to be fully concrete and real; yet, just because it was so presented, it was really at first undefined and unexplained, a fruitful

principle rather than a developed system. It was the idea of God as revealed in man, and the idea of man as by a supreme act of self-surrender finding the perfect realisation of himself as the son and servant of God. It was this as embodied in an individual to whom others might attach themselves, and by this attachment participate in the same life. It was man losing himself to find himself again in God, and God manifest in the flesh to draw all mankind to himself. It is this divine dialectic, as we might call it, which was directly expressed in the words of Christ as they are recorded in the Synoptic Gospels; and this also was the lesson which St. Paul generalised from the life and, above all, from the death of Christ. It was the same solution of the difficulties of life which had been suggested to the prophets by the sufferings of the people of Israel, trodden under feet of other nations, and yet conscious of itself as the people of God. And it also contained implicitly the key to all the antagonisms of thought that had been developed in Greek philosophy—the antagonism of the material and the spiritual, the antagonism of the phenomenal and the ideal or intelligible world, the antagonism of the finite and the infinite, the antagonism of the temporal and the eternal. In a word, it contained in itself the principle of an optimism which faces and overcomes the deepest pessimism, of an idealism which has room in itself for

the most realistic consciousness of all the distinctions and relations of the finite.

But it contained all this only *in principle*, and even that principle was not distinctly expressed, but was at first wrapped up in the conscious relation of the individual to One in whom it seemed once for all to be embodied. And though there is a truth in the assertion that relation to an individual person often contains, for those who experience it, a deeper meaning than they could have received or appreciated in any other form, yet, just for that reason, they can hardly be said to understand or possess the truth by which they are thus influenced; rather we should say that it possesses them, and carries them on to results which they cannot foresee. Thus, while an ideal, apprehended in an individual form, may be significant, and even infinitely significant, its significance is always to a great extent hidden even from him who feels it, and the more closely hidden, the greater that significance is. Admiration and love often anticipate the intelligence, and the heart may obscurely realise the presence of a power which the mind cannot measure. But such realisation is a dim foretaste, an obscure anticipation, of the truth; and it may require a long process of development ere it can pass into the intelligent appropriation and conscious appreciation of the principle involved in that which is admired and loved.

And there is, again, a long way to traverse between such acceptance of a principle and the recognition of all its consequences.

This will become clearer, if we bear in mind the novelty of an individualistic consciousness of God, such as that age was seeking, and such as it found in Christianity. The religion, like the morality, of earlier times was essentially social, mediated by the organisation of the community or national society, as a member of which, and only as a member of which, the individual was conscious of rights and duties in relation to other men, as well as of an ideal relation to God which consecrated both. But, as we have seen, the conquests of Rome put an end to all this. The Roman empire was the embodied negation of all such civic and national bonds, and, as such, it conquered at once the nations and their gods. But philosophy with the Greeks and Romans, and prophecy with the Jews, had provided a refuge for the religious consciousness, in the idea of a direct relation of the individual man to God, altogether independent of his relation to others as members of one political society. Already in the philosophical schools of the Greeks, and in the synagogues of the Jews, there had begun to exist what we may call a *Church*,[1] a bond of human beings as all directly related to God, and only through God related to each other. And this bond was by

[1] Cf. Wellhausen, *Israelitische and Jüdische Geschichte*, Chap. XV.

its very nature altogether independent of the unity of the State, which indeed, in the Roman empire, had ceased to be an ethical organisation of life, and had become only the maintainer of outward order.

Now, the consciousness of a relation to Christ, as the personality in whom the unity of God with man was consummated and manifested, while it gave a new life to this purely spiritual organisation, could not make it more than a Church; it could not raise it to that community of all interests secular and sacred, which had formerly been embodied in the civic or national State. The brotherhood of Christ was a union of abstract charity, which united men as religious beings, without making them the members of a political society. The Catholic Church was Catholic, because it included all Christians *as individuals* in virtue of their universal or spiritual nature; but it separated the concerns of that nature from all the secular affairs of life, and even when it did not seek to isolate the individual from these affairs, it could not do more than put an external limitation upon them. It could not unite flesh with spirit, the particular impulses of the finite life with the highest aspirations of the religious consciousness, in such a harmony as had been in large measure achieved in some of the political societies of the ancient world.

St. Paul, indeed, gives us a picture of the Church as a body, in which each member has a special office, and yet all members contribute to one life; but the actual Church, by the very fact that it excluded from its direct purview all the secular interests of life, could not possibly realise that ideal. It could not organise men into a real social whole by means of their particular tendencies and capacities. It could produce a collective unity of individuals through one supreme interest, but it could not mould them into a real social organism, since it excluded or at least did not directly include, their other interests. In fact, it could deal with those other interests directly only by treating them as of no account, and so creating not a State but a monastery. This fundamental weakness inevitably forced it, almost in spite of itself, in spite of the idea of the essential unity of the human with the divine on which it was based, into the path of asceticism. As a consequence, it tended more and more to obscure that idea, or to give a transcendent interpretation to it as a unity of God with men which was realised only in the person of Christ, and could not in the same sense be participated in by his followers. Thus the very dualism of human and divine, which Christ seemed to have come to terminate, began to reappear in a new form, in so far as the idea of their union was, as it

were, lifted into the skies, into the region of abstract dogma as to the nature of the divinity. And as this change was consummated, Christianity tended to become a religion of other-worldliness, a religion in which the life of this world was viewed merely as a preparation for another.

This tendency was at first resisted by the conception of Christ as the Jewish Messiah. For though the early Christians had learnt to regard Christ as a Messiah who conquers by suffering and death, and to look upon the world, in which this is the lot of supreme goodness, as in a sense given over to the power of evil, yet they did not despair of an earthly victory over such evil. On the contrary, it was their hope and belief that the struggle of a few years would bring about a renewal of all things, and that the church, by the return of its Lord, would be changed into a divine State, or kingdom of God upon earth. As, however, the days went on, and the 'promise of Christ's coming' seemed to fail, this hope passed away. The Church resigned itself to be only a church, and the world seemed to be finally given over to other powers. And, as a necessary consequence, the divine kingdom, for which the teaching and discipline of the Church was a preparation, transferred itself to another world. The Christian was a pilgrim and a stranger in this world, and his *patria*, the native land of his soul, where alone he could be a citizen, was to be found

only in heaven. And with this transference of the realisation of Christianity beyond death and time, the elevation of humanity into unity with the divine through union with Christ inevitably took the aspect of an unrealisable ideal, unrealisable at least on earth; and, as a natural consequence, the Church was set in perennial antagonism to the State.

There was, however, a still more important influence which acted in the same direction, namely, the influence of Greek, and in particular of Neo-Platonic, philosophy. This influence had already done much to modify Jewish religion at the beginning of the Christian era, as is shown by the writings of Philo, and it could not but be felt still more powerfully in the Christian Church. For, as soon as the Messianic idea left Jewish soil, it had to find an equivalent or substitute among the conceptions of the classical nations, and no idea could seem so appropriate as that of the *Logos* which had already been adopted by Philo. But with this change all the limitations, which in the Jewish mind were connected with the Messianic idea, were at once thrown off. Already in the writings of St. Paul the conception of the Christ as 'the first-born of many brethren,' who had been raised from the dead by God as an evidence of his universal mission to men, seems to rise above every condition of finite life; and in the later Epistles he is declared to be the 'image of the invisible

God,' the Being who 'is before all things,' and by whom 'all things consist.'[1] And there was a danger that the Neo-Platonic idea of the *Logos* should be carried so far as to reduce the whole human life of Christ to a mere illusive appearance of one who was not a real human being at all. Even the Gospel of St. John might seem to give some countenance to such a view; for while the writer protests against it, and even dwells with special force and vehemence on its opposite, speaking of 'that which our eyes have seen and our hands have handled of the word of life,'[2] and denouncing as the worst of heresies the idea that Christ had not 'come in the flesh'; yet he himself throughout his narrative is continually insisting on the supernatural aspects of the life of Christ. It was, in fact, just because the Son of Man was so much lost in the Son of God that the assertion of his real humanity had become absolutely necessary. In the protests of St. John, therefore, we see the beginning of those controversies as to the relation of the divine to the human in Christ, which were to vex the Church through all the centuries in which it was occupied in the formulation of its creed. The two terms, God and man, were here for the first time brought together with a full consciousness of all that tends to divide

[1] Col. I, 16, 17.

[2] If the first Epistle be by the same writer as the Gospel.

and oppose them; and it was impossible that the Church should rest until the difficulties of their difference and unity should be fought out to some decided issue. It was, therefore, by no avoidable accident that these controversies arose in the Church. For so soon as the meaning of the life of Christ, and of the attitude of perfect surrender to God and unity with him, which Jesus Christ maintained both in his life and in his death, began to be realised—and this could not be long delayed in an age when Greek thought had made men so fully alive to the antagonistic elements involved in the question—it was inevitable that this problem should become all-important. Nor was it possible that the Church should rest with complete assurance in its faith, till all the various aspects of it were considered, and till the controversy regarding them was brought to a definite issue.

Now there are many writers, and not only sceptical writers, but Christian theologians—including, indeed, the most important school of German theology in recent times—who hold that the great controversies of the early Church about the Trinity and the Incarnation were controversies about words, or at best about subtilties introduced by Greek philosophy into the Christian religion, which have no real significance for later times. They are, in the language of Harnack, parts of that secularisation of the Christian faith by

which it was drawn down into the sphere of an unchristian system of thought. Or, as others have held, they are meaningless attempts to define the incomprehensible, from which no satisfaction to the intelligence of man can be drawn. Such a view seems to me to show a want of the power to recognise that the controversies of an earlier time have a real meaning, though the problems discussed are not exactly *our* problems, and the language used in the debate has become unfamiliar. If, however, we can get over this appearance of strangeness, we shall be little inclined to the superficial view that the human mind wrestled for centuries over the difference between verbal definitions of the Unknowable. I do not believe that controversies about words ever occupy a great space in human history, although it is true that the controversies of the past often seem to us mere controversies about words. But this is simply because we have not realised what the issues really meant to those who contended so strenuously about them. In the present case we have only to go a little below the surface to discern the vital relation which the controversies of the early Christian centuries have to those which occupy our minds in the present day.

The truth is that the question of the early Christian centuries was simply the great problem as to the relation of the human to the divine, of the spirits of men to the absolute Being, which is the greatest

theme of modern philosophy; but in that age the opposing views could only take the form of different conceptions of the person of Christ. Can God reveal himself to and in man? Can man be the organ and manifestation of God? Such is the perennial issue which the Christian Church has had to face; but in that age it had to face it only in relation to him, in whom the consciousness of sonship to God had shown itself in its first and most immediate form. Admitting that Christ was such a being, and that in him and to him God was revealed, could he be regarded as a real man? Was it not a degradation for him to be brought into contact with mortality, and must not his appearance be regarded as a mere semblance which was necessary for the purpose of his mission? On the other hand, if his appearance as man were such a semblance or illusion, how could he reveal the reality? How could a mediator, who was not man, unite man to God? Must not the two terms break asunder and require some new middle term to unite them, unless Christ were at once very man and very God? This was the circle within which the controversy turned during the first five centuries of the Christian era. The ultimate result of the conflict was the assertion of the unity of divinity and humanity in Christ; but at the same time this result was in two ways deprived of a great part of its meaning. In the first place, it was

confined to Christ alone; and in the second place, the unity was regarded as, so to speak, rather a static than a dynamic unity, that is, not as a unity realised in the process of the Christian life, the process of self-surrender and self-sacrifice through which humanity becomes—what potentially it is—the highest organ of the divine self-manifestation, but as a unity that exists independently of any process whatsoever.

Now the imperfection of this result is partly explained by the necessity that the *principle* of the unity of the divine and the human should be asserted, ere it could be worked out to any farther consequences. Christ was the one crucial instance which, if it could be maintained as real, must inevitably determine the whole issue. If one man, living such a life of self-sacrifice for mankind, were in perfect unity with God, so that his consciousness of himself could be taken as the divine self-consciousness, then must not the same be true of all who followed in his footsteps? If so, then the highest goodness was shown to be only the realisation of an ideal which every human soul, as such, bears within it. God is manifested in man under the ordinary conditions of human life, whenever man gives himself up to God. The power that builds and holds the universe together is shown, in a higher form than by any creative act, in every man that lives not for himself, but as an organ and minister of divine love to men.

But this result could not be seen at first. In the early centuries the idea could not be realised except in relation to its first pure manifestation. Christianity had, indeed, revealed God in man, but at first only in *the* Man, who was 'the first-born of many brethren.' And the whole movement of thought was at first concentrated on the effort to realise this unity of humanity and divinity in the person of him, who was presented as at once the Son of Man and the Son of God. Christ must be 'lifted up' ere he could draw all men to him. In other men, this unity was a 'far off divine event,' which had to be realised by a self-conquest that could never be quite complete. Thus Christianity had cast man down, in order to raise him up; and the negative aspect of this revelation must necessarily show itself before the positive.[1] This was the inner necessity of the situation. But there was also an outward necessity corresponding to it. Greek philosophy supplied the form in which the reflective thought of the time was cast, the intellectual weapons with which it worked, the categories or general conceptions by means of which it sought to deal with any new matter that was brought to it. And this philosophy was, as we have seen, profoundly dualistic, and the efforts of Neo-Platonism to overcome the dualism had only brought it into a more startling form. Its hierarchy

[1] Cf. *Evolution of Religion*, II, Lect. 10.

of powers reaching up to the absolute One and down to formless matter, showed at once the *need* of mediation, and the *impossibility* of attaining it in consistency with the presuppositions from which the system started. For in a true mediation the middle term cannot be a mere intermediate, but must transcend, and comprehend in one, the two terms that are opposed. A reflexion which was guided by the ideals of such a philosophy was apt to bring division into the nature of the object to which it was applied, or, at least, to bring into active manifestation any tendency to division that belonged to it. Now, as we have seen, Christianity had in it from the first a negative side. Its essential moral idea was that of self-realisation through self-sacrifice. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." In such words Christ showed his confidence, that a new and a richer life would arise out of the death or sacrifice of the immediate natural existence; but he demanded that the old life should perish ere the new life could arise. These two elements, the negative and the positive, are held in perfect balance in the consciousness of Christ, as it is expressed in the Synoptic Gospels, with its perfect self-surrender even to death, its absolute trust in God, and its confident reading of the divine goodness in all nature and providence, in the face of the fiercest manifestations of evil passion. In Christ, we might

say, optimism emerges serene and triumphant from everything that could be brought to prove its opposite. Perfect idealism shows itself stronger than all the materialism of the world. *Das Ernst des Negativen*, the reality of sin and misery, has full justice done to it, but the positive overreaches it, and transforms it into good. The prayer "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," with its reduction of evil to ignorance, is perhaps the most victorious assertion of the relativity of evil that ever has been made.

But it was hardly possible that this balance should be preserved, and the very exigencies of the prolonged struggle of the Church with the world tended to bring the negative aspect of its doctrines into greater and greater prominence. Moreover, modes of thought derived from Greek philosophy were constantly aiding this tendency, and even at times threatening to break up the unity of the Christian consciousness altogether. Through the more educated of the converts to the Christian faith, through the Gnostics and the Christian Fathers—who opposed the Gnostics, but in doing so received a strong reactive influence from Gnosticism—through the Alexandrian school of theology, especially as represented by Clement and Origen, and at a later date by Augustine, the ideas of Neo-Platonism invaded the Christian theology. And wherever they came,

they tended to emphasise the negative and to weaken the positive elements of the Christian faith. The result was somewhat ambiguous. The fundamental idea of Christianity could not be lost; but it was, so to speak, driven back to its last entrenchment in the consciousness of Christ, and all the outworks were surrendered to the enemy. To put the matter more clearly, Christianity could not give up its central idea of the unity of the human with the divine, nor could it give up the faith that men in some sense are capable of being participators in the divine nature. But, under the influence of Neo-Platonic modes of thought, the gulf between Christ and other men tended to widen. The heresy that reduced the humanity of Christ to an illusive appearance was defeated in its direct aim, but it was victorious in so far as the glorified Christ was absolutely separated from and raised above all his fellows, till it became almost a paradox to say that "he was in all points tempted like as we are." The strong language of St. John's Gospel, "that they may be one, even as we are one," had to be explained away. And though St. Athanasius could still say, that "He became man that we might be made gods,"[1] it was inevitable that such words should come to seem too daring.

[1] αὐτὸς, γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν. *De Incarn. Verbi*, § 54.

The change which passed over the doctrine of the Trinity is another indication in the same direction. In earlier writers and in St. Athanasius it is immediately connected with the doctrine of the Incarnation; it is essentially an attempt to deal with the great question of the unity of God and man. But with St. Augustine, who was deeply under the influence of the Neo-Platonists, and from whom the Athanasian creed with its mysterious antithetic utterances is derived, it becomes an almost unintelligible account of the inner nature of the Deity.[1] It might fairly be said that a change passed over the idea of the God-man very like that which passed over the idea of the world-soul between Plato and Plotinus, by which the very link between the intelligence and the matter was itself taken up into the intelligible world. And the mediation of the Virgin and the saints had to be brought in to fill up the breach thus made in the unity of the human and the divine. At the same time, the Christian view of life had to be modified in conformity with the new conception of the relation of man to God. The possibility of the realisation

[1] St. Augustine, indeed, still tries to illustrate the idea of the Trinity by several analogies, *e.g*, the unity of *memoria*, *intelligentia*, and *voluntas* in one consciousness; but otherwise he seems to lose the meaning of the distinction of Persons in the *inseparabilis operatio*. The Divinity, in fact, becomes with him a mystery, rather than what the doctrine first sought to be, an explanation. And this change is manifestly due to Neo-Platonic influences.

of the life of Christ in other men was not and could not be denied, but it was referred to another world, for which this was regarded merely as a preparation. Millennial anticipations of a regenerated earth were exchanged for the conception of the earthly life as a trial and discipline for a better world. And if the ascetic ideal could not absolutely triumph in a religion that proclaimed the resurrection of the body, if the natural feelings and affections of humanity could not be declared essentially impure, because connected with sense and matter, yet the discredit of following a lower ideal was attached to the life of the family and the State. In short, it may fairly be argued that through this whole period the development of Christianity was one-sided, and that, though it could not altogether surrender its essential character as a doctrine of reconciliation, as the revelation of a unity of human and divine that underlies their difference and overcomes it, yet it was drawn in the direction of dualism as far as was possible consistently with its retaining any hold of the life of Christ. And if it be said that this dualistic movement was itself a necessary stage in the development of the Christian idea, yet, on the other hand, we cannot doubt that the main agency by which it was accomplished was the Greek, and in particular the Neo-Platonic philosophy. In this case, even more clearly than in the case of the empire of Rome,

we can see that conquered Greece laid spiritual fetters on its victor. Greece provided Christianity with the weapons of culture which enabled it to subdue the minds of its opponents, but at the same time it did much to determine the main bias and direction of the religious consciousness which was established by its means. It gave its own form to the life and doctrine of the Church, at least down to the time when, by a new reaction, the spirit of Christianity began to free itself from the tutelage that was necessary to its earlier development.

These remarks on the influence of Greek philosophy, especially in its Neo-Platonic form, upon the development of Christian doctrine, are of course not intended to be exhaustive. They are intended merely to indicate the great effect of the movement of Greek thought upon the theology of the Christian Church. In different ways Greek philosophy may be regarded as the germ out of which Christian theology sprang, or as the great adverse force which it had to combat. It was the former, if we consider that in Neo-Platonism Greek philosophy was struggling with the ideas of the antagonism between the divine and the human, and at the same time of the necessity of their relation. The problem which Christianity had to solve, reached its most definite and decisive expression in the Neo-Platonic philosophy. And we must remember that he who puts such a problem

distinctly before the human mind, has already done much to help towards its solution. On the other hand, Neo-Platonism itself was not able to reach such a solution. It set the two terms in such absolute opposition that a true synthesis or reconciliation of them was impossible. It altogether separated the Infinite from the finite; or, if it tried to mediate between them by means of the intelligence and the world-soul, yet as it regarded even the world-soul as belonging entirely to the intelligible world, it could not conceive it as descending into the world of sense and matter, or as reconciling the world of sense and matter with the divine. Its last word was escape, not reconciliation, the deliverance of the soul from the bonds of finitude, and not the conversion of the finite itself into the organ and manifestation of the infinite. Hence, when brought in relation to Christianity, Neo-Platonism became an influence in favour of dualism. It tended to break the unity of life and thought which Christianity sought to establish, or at least to limit and make imperfect the reconciliation which Christianity sought to attain.

Yet, even so, it discharged a very useful office. In the region of spirit a victory won too easily is of little value. An optimism established without any difficulty becomes worse than any pessimism: an idealism that has not entered into all the differences and antagonisms of the real is futile. Even Christianity

has tended to become an ignoring rather than a healing of the evils of life when it has not been based on the deepest consciousness of those evils. Hence we must regard as a friend in disguise the enemy which again and again has forced the church and the world to recognise, how imperfectly the spiritual object of Christianity has been attained, how far the actual is from the ideal, how secular and profane the life of even the most Christian of men still is, how far the kingdoms of this world are from realising the idea of the kingdom of God. As a 'facile Monism' is the grave of any true and comprehensive attempt to discover the ideal meaning of the universe, so the idea of the unity of God and man may itself become the most shallow of illusions, if that unity be taken as a static identity, and, if it be not recognised that the realisation of it involves the overcoming of the deepest of all antagonisms.

Now, modern philosophy from the time of the Renaissance has sought to emphasise the positive rather than the negative aspect of ethics and religion, almost as decisively as the Middle Ages emphasised their negative aspect. Sometimes, indeed, it has gone so far in this direction as to forget the negative altogether. Even where it has not proclaimed Hedonism as the principle of morals, it has tended to exalt self-development to the exclusion of self-sacrifice, and it has sought the divine in nature

rather than beyond it. And a Pantheism that speaks of *Deus sive Natura* leaves it at least ambiguous whether nature is taken up into God, or God is merged in nature. If this tendency had gained absolute predominance, the modern world would have forgotten its Christianity, and gone back—as Heine at one time wished it to go back—to a kind of aesthetic paganism. It is essential to Christianity to maintain—in the face of all the positive tendencies of the modern spirit—that a true self-development can be attained only through self-sacrifice, and that, if God reveals himself in man, it is only as man gives himself up, to be the servant and organ of a divine purpose in humanity. Hence there is much still to be learnt from a philosophy that keeps before us the depth of the antagonism between the natural and the spiritual, between the real and the ideal, between man and God. And we may regard Greek philosophy, in spite of the negative character of its ultimate result, and perhaps because of it, as, in itself and in its influence upon Christian thought, contributing an invaluable element to theological thought.

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